

FÉNELON'S  
EDUCATION  
OF GIRLS  
—  
LUPTON

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THE  
EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

BY FENELON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

KATE LUPTON, M.A. (VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY).



BOSTON, U.S.A.:

PUBLISHED BY GINN & COMPANY.

1891.

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## PREFACE.

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IN this, which has been so aptly termed the woman's century, no book that bears upon the aims and methods that should characterize the training of girls, can fail to possess a certain intrinsic interest. The following treatise on that subject was written by the Archbishop of Cambray while he was still only the Abbé de Fénelon, for his friend, the Duchess de Beauvilliers, as a practical guide in the education of her children. Given to the public in 1687, it was at once received with the greatest favor, and laid the foundation of that high reputation which afterwards brought such distinguished honors to its author. Lamartine and other critics have compared it favorably with the celebrated "Emile" of Rousseau, and denominated it "a masterpiece of delicacy and reason."

While the book affords a striking illustration of the truth that genius is of no age or country, and soars into realms from which broad views of men and things are caught, it is not entirely unaffected by the author's environment. Often Fénelon seems to shrink from the conclusions to which his own insight and logic lead him. Broad, indeed, however, must the culture here proposed for women have appeared to his contemporaries. Latin, history, biography, travels, poetry, and the nobler developments of music and art, as well as the principles and phraseology of common law, the operations of

trade, the processes of manufactures, and the minutest details of domestic economy, are all included in the course of instruction blocked out.

But the chief merit of this little volume consists not in its noble conception of the position of woman, and valuable suggestions for her training, nor even in the exquisite finish and almost poetic beauty of style, which has been at once the delight and despair of the translator. At least two-thirds of the contents treat of a far more interesting and important question than any that concerns the peculiar needs and dangers of girls; that is, how children of either sex can be trained so as to produce the best possible results in disposition and character. This is a subject on which Fénelon is of all men best fitted to speak, if we may believe the accounts given by historians of the wonderful change wrought by him in his pupil, the grandson of Louis XIV. This prince is described as "terrible from his birth, passionate, bitter, vindictive, and even cruel by nature." Under the mild but firm sway of his gifted tutor, he was completely transformed, and became the hope, instead of the terror, of the court. The sympathetic insight into the heart of childhood and wise skill in dealing with it, that enabled Fénelon to work such a seeming miracle upon his royal pupil, appear in every detail of the system of training children which he has so carefully elaborated in the "Education of Girls." Whoever has charge of little children, whether in home or school, will find many profitable hints as to their management in its pages. Many of the ideas of the kindergarten are here advanced, and even that very modern institution, the Normal School, is suggested.



The translation of such a work into adequate English presents many difficulties. The effort has been made to adhere as closely to the original as the difference between the genius of the French language and that of ours will allow. No portion of the treatise has been omitted, and even the quotations from the Scriptures have been left in the form in which Fénelon gives them — that of more or less free renderings from the Vulgate.

KATE LUPTON.

AUBURN, ALABAMA.

Nov. 26, 1890.

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## FÉNELON.



FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE-FÉNELON, one of the greatest writers and one of the most illustrious men of the seventeenth century, was born in 1651. His father, a nobleman of Southern France, destined his son for the Church. It was a happy choice, for the lad believed that he heard the divine call in his heart. His education, which was begun in his father's chateau, was completed under the Jesuits, — then the ablest teachers in Europe, — at Paris. At fifteen, while still a student, Fénelon preached his first sermon. For several years he labored in the parish of St. Sulpice, where one of his chief duties was to catechise and instruct the children of the poor.

His ambition was to become a missionary among the Indians of Canada. Had his wish been granted, his career might have been sketched in advance. He would have gone out with one of those little bands of devoted Catholics who made themselves exiles for Christ's sake. Like them, he would have lived for a time in the Ameri-

can wilderness, making his home in the smoky wigwams of the Canadian savages. He would have ended by falling prisoner to some hostile tribe, who would have first scalped their captive, and then tortured him to death. But instead of going to the red men of the forest, Fénelon was destined to serve as a missionary at home. Of the two, the polished French court, cold, crafty, "honey-combed with hypocrisy," needed him most. He was first called to use his skill in religious teaching, however, with a very different class. An institution existed in Paris known as the convent of the New Catholics. It was founded for the purpose of forcing the daughters of Protestant parents to renounce their faith. The arguments used to convince these young girls were those of the prison-cell, the scourge, and starvation,—at least, these were the arguments that appear to have been relied upon to convince those who failed to see the force of the reasoning employed by the priests. Unfortunately a considerable percentage of these girls, instead of becoming Catholics, either died or went mad. On the whole it was thought advisable to adopt a different method. The convent authorities remembered Æsop's fable about the man who, when the wind and the storm could not force him to give up his cloak, finally gave it up when the sun tried his powers on him. Fénelon had the sun's secret. He did not

storm the obstinate hearts; he melted them. Gentleness won victories denied to brutality; and, as Paul persuaded the heathen to become Christians, so Fénelon persuaded Protestants to become Catholics like himself. In fact, so wonderful was the influence of his winning sweetness of character, — a trait inherited from his mother, — that a noted English sceptic, hard-headed and scoffing though he was, said, speaking of an interview with Fénelon, “I had to get away from him as fast as I could, or he would certainly have ended by converting me.”

During his ten years in this convent the young divine met with gratifying success; and it was while thus engaged that he wrote his celebrated treatise on the *Education of Girls*, of which a translation follows. This work was composed for the special purpose of assisting a friend in the task of rearing a large family of daughters, and displays a profound knowledge of the workings of the hearts and minds of children. It has a decided historical interest, since it marks the beginning, in France at least, of a movement which resulted in giving to girls those intellectual advantages which had hitherto been denied them. Many of its maxims are highly suggestive; and not the least of its merits is the spirit of the book, which, if heeded, might help us to correct the excessive individualism and self-asser-



tion of our times, by cultivating those qualities of self-restraint, which, if less brilliant, are certainly not less useful.

In 1685 Fénelon was to try his power in a broader and more difficult field. That year Louis XIV. revoked the Edict of Nantes, and in doing so revoked toleration to the Protestant religion throughout his realm. To make the revocation more effective, the King's dragoons were quartered in the Protestant districts, with liberty to use any methods, short of downright murder, to compel the heretics to see the error of their ways. Madame de Maintenon, whose influence over Louis was unbounded, felt sure that these "missionaries in cavalry boots," as she jocosely called them, would succeed in bringing, or driving, every Huguenot into the fold of the Church. She was disappointed; and, as a last resort, the King resolved to send Fénelon to try what he could do. The attempt was made, but with only partial success. Perhaps if the good Abbé had been sent in the start, the result might have been different, since, like the zealous Catholic who counselled Catherine de Medicis, Fénelon believed that a good life was the best possible weapon to put down heresy.

A year later we find that the King had chosen the Abbé as preceptor to his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, heir to the throne of France. By patience, tact,



and firmness, Fénelon succeeded in taming the passionate royal blood of this fiery young prince. Had the young man lived, his virtues, if not too negative, might possibly have saved France from the worst excesses of that revolution which in the next century was to sweep over the land like a deluge ; but he did not live, and all that remains of Fénelon's work is the famous story of *Telemachus*, which he wrote for the guidance and instruction of the young Duke whom he hoped to transform into a second St. Louis.

In 1695 the King made Fénelon Archbishop of Cambrai, a city on the extreme northern border of France. Meanwhile Fénelon had become interested in the teachings of Madame Guyon, a religious mystic or quietist, who laid more emphasis on the soul's inner light and communion with God than on the creed or ceremonies of the Church. Poor Madame Guyon soon had an opportunity to test her quietism in a solitary cell of the Bastille, and Bossuet, the champion of French Catholicism, wrote a refutation of her doctrine. Archbishop Fénelon replied to Bossuet in a book which the King regarded as a sort of defence or half-defence of Madame Guyon. The result was that the Catholic authorities of France took the alarm, and in the end the Pope formally condemned Fénelon's book. Louis banished the Archbishop of Cambrai from Versailles,

and forbade his showing himself at the royal palace. Fénelon not only accepted the Pope's condemnation without complaint, but actually warned his own flock from the pulpit not to read or retain his reply to Bossuet.

To bring matters to a climax, fate ordained that just then an unfaithful secretary should carry off and get published the *Telemachus* which Fénelon had then no intention of issuing from the press. Louis XIV. read the book, and found in it, as he believed, an attack on his absolutism. The King hated nothing so much as independence of thought. Fénelon had dared to think for himself not only in religious matters, but also in regard to government. In *Telemachus* the Archbishop taught that the people are not made for the king, but the king for the people. No satire was intended on Louis, but that monarch so interpreted it, and he forthwith declared the Archbishop's banishment perpetual.

From that time until his death Fénelon remained an exile at Cambrai. He spent the whole of his revenue, except the small sum that sufficed to meet his own wants, in works of charity. The nobles of Versailles had forgotten him; but the poor and the distressed opened their hearts to this man who shared his life with them. In 1715 the release from exile came; Fénelon

went to his grave followed by the tears and the blessings of thousands. That same year Louis XIV. died, leaving his realm bankrupt and his people suffering from the effects of more than half a century of royal wars, royal extravagance, and royal follies. All along the road leading to the King's tomb multitudes gathered: they gathered to curse the coffin as it passed.



THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.



# THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

NOTHING is more neglected than the education of girls. Custom and maternal caprice often decide the matter entirely, and it is taken for granted that little instruction should be given to their sex. The education of boys is regarded as a most important affair with reference to the public welfare; and although almost as many mistakes are made in it as in the education of girls, at least the world is convinced that, there, much wisdom is necessary to success. On that subject, the most competent persons have undertaken to lay down rules. How many teachers and colleges for boys do we see! What vast expenditures in their behalf for editions of books, for scientific researches, for methods of teaching the languages, and for the choice of professors! All these great preparations are often more pretentious than effective, but at least they mark the lofty conception that the world has of the education of boys. As for girls, it is said, they should not be learned; inquisitiveness makes them vain and affected: it is enough for them to know how some day to manage their households and to obey their husbands without argument.

Men do not fail to make use of the fact that they have known many women whom learning has made ridiculous, after which they think themselves justified in blindly abandoning their daughters to the guidance of ignorant and indiscreet mothers.

True, we must be on our guard against making them ridiculous blue-stockings. Women, as a rule, have still weaker and more inquisitive minds than men; therefore it is not expedient to engage them in studies that may turn their heads: they are not destined to govern the state, to make war, or to minister in holy things; so they may pass by certain extended fields of knowledge that belong to politics, the art of war, jurisprudence, philosophy, and theology. Most of the mechanic arts, even, are not suited to women, who are fashioned for moderate exertions only. Their bodies as well as their minds are less strong and robust than those of men. As a compensation, nature has given them for their portion neatness, industry, and thrift, in order to keep them quietly occupied in their homes.

But what follows from this natural weakness of women? The weaker they are, the more important it is to strengthen them. Have they not duties to fulfil, and duties, too, that lie at the foundation of all human life? Is it not the women, who ruin or uphold families, who regulate every detail of domestic life, and who consequently decide what touches the whole human race most nearly? In this way they exert a controlling influence on the good or bad morals of nearly all the world. A discreet, diligent, pious woman is the soul of an entire large household; she provides in it alike for temporal and spiritual welfare. Even men, who have exclusive



authority in public, cannot by their decisions, establish a real prosperity unless women aid them in its achievement.

The world is not an abstraction; it is the aggregate of all its families. And who can regulate these with nicer care than women, who, besides their natural authority and assiduity in their homes, have the additional advantage of being born careful, attentive to details, industrious, winning, and persuasive? Or can men hope for any happiness for themselves if their most intimate companionship—that of marriage—be turned to bitterness? And as to children, who will eventually constitute the entire human race,—what will become of them if their mothers spoil them in their early years?

Such, then, are the occupations of women, which are no less important to the public than those of men, since they involve the tasks of managing a household, making a husband happy, and training children well. Virtue, moreover, is no less incumbent on women than on men; and, not to speak of the good or harm they may do to mankind, women constitute half of the human race redeemed by the blood of Christ and destined to eternal life.

In conclusion, we must consider, besides the good that women do if properly brought up, the evil they may cause in the world when they lack a training that inspires virtue. It is evident that a bad education is productive of more harm in the case of women than in that of men, since the excesses of the latter often proceed both from the bad training received from their mothers and from the passions awakened in them at a later age by other women. What intrigues, what subversions of law and

morality, what bloody wars, what innovations against religion, what revolutions in government caused by the profligacy of women, are presented to us in history! Such is the proof of the importance of training girls well: let us inquire into the means of accomplishing this object.

## CHAPTER II.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE ORDINARY METHODS OF  
EDUCATION.

A GIRL becomes listless and is at a loss how to occupy herself innocently, because of her ignorance. When she has reached a certain age without giving her attention to things of real moment, she can neither have a taste for them nor appreciate their value ; everything that is serious seems dreary to her, and everything that demands continued attention wearies her. The inclination to pleasure so strong in youth, the example of persons of the same age absorbed in amusement, everything tends to make her shrink from an orderly and industrious life. In these earlier years she lacks the experience and authority requisite for the oversight of anything in her parents' home. She does not even recognize the importance of applying herself to such matters unless her mother has taken the pains to call her attention to it in particular instances. If she be of the upper classes, she is exempt from manual labor. She is at work, therefore, for a few hours of the day only, because people say, without knowing why, that it is right for women to have something to do ; but often this is a mere pretence, and she will not accustom herself to protracted effort.

Under these circumstances, what is a girl to do ? The companionship of a mother who watches her, who scolds her, who thinks she is bringing her up well by pardon-

ing nothing in her, who is stiff with her, who makes her the victim of her whims, and who appears to her always weighed down with all domestic cares, cramps and repels her ; while she is surrounded by flattering maidservants who, seeking to ingratiate themselves with her by servile and dangerous attentions, carry out all her fancies and talk to her of all that can give her a distaste for what is good. Piety appears to her an insipid occupation and its principles fatal to all pleasures. With what, then, shall she employ herself ? With nothing useful. This lack of application even becomes an incurable habit.

Behold, then, a great void that we cannot hope to fill with substantial things ; frivolous ones must, therefore, take their place. In this state of idleness, a girl gives herself up to indolence ; and indolence, which is a languor of the soul, is an inexhaustible source of ennui. She forms the habit of sleeping a third longer than is necessary for perfect health. This long sleep only serves to enervate her, to make her more delicate, and more exposed to revolts of the flesh. A moderate amount of sleep, on the contrary, accompanied by regular exercise, makes one cheerful, vigorous, and robust ; and secures, without doubt, the true perfection of the body — not to mention the advantages that accrue to the mind. This idleness and self-indulgence, being united with ignorance, produce a hurtful susceptibility to the charms of amusements and plays ; it is these also that excite an indiscreet and insatiable curiosity.

Well-informed persons, who are occupied with serious matters, have usually only a moderate curiosity. What they know gives them a contempt for much of which

they are ignorant ; they see the uselessness and folly of most of the information that petty minds, that know nothing and have nothing to do, are eager to acquire.

On the other hand, idle and badly taught girls have ever-wandering imaginations. In the absence of solid food their curiosity turns eagerly to foolish and dangerous objects. Those that have talent often set themselves up for learned women, and read every book that can feed their vanity. They delight in romances, in comedies, and in tales of marvellous adventures in which unhallowed love is concerned. They acquire a fanciful turn of mind from familiarity with the grandiloquent language of the heroes of romance : thus they unfit themselves for real life ; for all those airy fine sentiments, all those generous emotions, all those adventures invented by the authors of romances to gratify the fancy, have no connection with the real motives that actuate mankind and decide their affairs, nor with the disappointments that we meet with in every undertaking

The poor girl, full of the examples of the tender and the marvellous that have charmed her in her reading, is astonished not to meet in the world real persons that are like her heroes ; she would live like those imaginary princesses, who in the romances are ever charming, ever adored, ever above all wants. How distasteful for her to descend from such heroic heights to the lowest details of housekeeping !

Some girls push their curiosity still further and aspire to decide on religious questions to which they are not equal. Those that have not ability enough for such investigations pursue others suited to their capacity. They ardently desire to know everything that is said

and done; be it song, item of news, or intrigue; to receive letters and to read those received by others. They are vain, and their vanity makes them talkative; they are frivolous, and their frivolity prevents the reflections that would often keep them silent.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF AN EDUCATION.

IN remedying all these evils it would be a great advantage to be able to begin the education of girls from their tenderest infancy. That first period of life which is left to the care of foolish, and sometimes vicious women, is the very one in which the deepest impressions are made, and which consequently has a great bearing on the whole of after-life.

Before children know how to speak plainly they may be prepared for instruction. Some may think I go too far; but only consider what the child that cannot yet talk is doing. It is learning a language which it will soon speak more accurately than the learned can speak the dead languages which they have studied with such pains at a riper age. And what is it to learn a language? It is not merely to store the memory with a great number of words; it is, in addition to this, says St. Augustine, to note the peculiar meaning of each of these words. "The child," says he, "amid its cries and sports notices what object each word stands for; this it does by first regarding the natural movements of the body that touch or point out the objects of which we speak, and then being struck by the frequent repetition of the same word to represent the same object." True, the formation of the brain in infancy gives a wonderful aptitude for receiving the impression of all these

images ; but what mental concentration is required to distinguish them and attach each to its proper object !

Consider, moreover, how, even as early as this, children seek those who caress them and avoid those who restrain them, how well they know how to cry or to be quiet in order to obtain what they desire, how much cunning and jealousy they already possess.

“I have seen,” says St. Augustine, “an infant jealous ; though still unable to speak, it already regarded with pale countenance and angry eyes the child at the breast with it.”

As early as this, then, you may count on children’s understanding more than people usually imagine : so you can give them, by means of words aided by tones and gestures, an inclination for the society of the upright and virtuous persons with whom they may be thrown rather than that of other injudicious ones whom they might be in danger of loving : so also you can depict to them with horror, by means of different expressions of your countenance, and the tone of your voice, persons whom they have seen in anger or any other excess ; and select the pleasantest tones and most serene countenance to set before them with admiration whatever they have seen that is discreet and modest.

I do not present these small things as great ones, but nevertheless these early inclinations are beginnings that should not be neglected, and this method of prepossessing children in advance has consequences that, though scarcely perceptible, make education easier.

If any one still doubts the power of these first prepossessions of infancy over men, he has only to consider how vivid and tender the memories of what one



has loved in childhood remain to an advanced age. If, instead of arousing in children foolish fears of spectres and ghosts which only weaken their still tender brains by undue excitement; if, instead of leaving them to follow every fancy of their nurses as to what they shall love or shun, you would endeavor always to give them a pleasant idea of what is good and a frightful idea of what is bad, this prepossession would materially facilitate the practice of all the virtues in after life. On the contrary, they are made afraid of a priest clothed in black, death is only mentioned to them to frighten them, and they are told that the dead return by night in hideous form: all this only tends to make the spirit weak and cowardly and to preoccupy it to the exclusion of better things.

The most important point during the first years of childhood is to establish the child's health, to try to give it a gentle disposition by means of well-chosen food and the regulations of a simple life. A child's meals should be so ordered that they will always come at about the same hour, and as often as its needs require; that nothing is eaten between meals, as that would overcharge the stomach while digestion is going on; that nothing highly seasoned is eaten, for that would excite an appetite beyond the child's needs and would give it a distaste for more healthful food; and finally, that too many articles are not served, for a variety of dishes, following one after another, keeps up the appetite after the real need of food is at an end.

The important points still left are to allow the organs to strengthen by not pressing instruction, to avoid all that can fire the passions, and gently to accustom the

child to being deprived of the things for which it has shown too much ardor, so that it may never hope to obtain its desires.

However unfavorable the natural disposition of children may be, it is possible by such means to make them docile, patient, steady, cheerful, and tranquil ; if, on the contrary, this first period is neglected, they become passionate and restless for life, their blood is inflamed, the still tender body and the soul which as yet has no bent towards any particular object, yield readily to evil ; thus a kind of second original sin is created within them, which is the source of a thousand evils when they are older.

From the time when they reach a later age at which their reason is fully developed, every word spoken to them should help to make them love virtue and to inspire in them a contempt for all double-dealing. Therefore you should never use any pretence in order to console them or to persuade them to your wishes ; by such conduct you would teach them deceit, which they would never forget : they should be led, as far as possible, by reason.

But let us examine more closely the condition of children, in order that we may consider more in detail what is best for them. The substance of their brains is soft, and hardening every day ; as for their minds, they know nothing ; everything is novel to them. This softness of the brain causes everything to be easily impressed thereon, and the surprise of novelty makes them ready to admire and very inquisitive. It is also true that this moisture and softness of the brain, accompanied as it is by great heat, causes ready and constant

motion. Hence ensues the restlessness of children, who can never let their minds rest on a particular object or their bodies in a particular spot.

On the other hand, since children as yet know nothing to think about or to occupy themselves with, they observe everything, but speak little, unless they have been encouraged to talk a great deal, and this point must be well guarded. Often the pleasure we would derive from pretty children is a source of injury to them; they form the habit of trying everything that comes into their heads and of speaking on subjects of which as yet they have no definite knowledge: this results in a life-long habit of judging hastily and of talking about subjects on which they have no clear ideas—which produces a very objectionable cast of mind.

The pleasure you would derive from children has still another pernicious effect: they perceive that you regard them with complacency, that you notice all they do and enjoy listening to them; hence they come to believe that the world will always be taken up with them.

At this age when one is applauded and has never yet met with contradiction, there arise delusive hopes which prepare infinite disappointment for after life. I have seen children who thought they were being talked about whenever there was any private conversation, because they had often observed this to be the case; they imagined themselves to have no characteristics that were not extraordinary and admirable. Therefore it is important, in caring for children, not to let them see that you are giving them much thought. Make it appear that you are attentive to their behavior from affection and on account of their need of correction, not from admiration

of their intelligence. Be content to form their characters little by little as occasions naturally come up. Even when you could advance a child's intelligence greatly without forcing it, you ought to hesitate to do so; for the dangers of vanity and presumption always outweigh the benefits of that premature development which attracts so much attention.

You should content yourself with following and assisting nature. Children know but little, so they should not be urged to talk; but as they are ignorant of many things, they have many questions to ask, so they ask many. It is enough to reply to these questions with precision, and sometimes to add some simple illustrations in order to render the explanations you give them clearer. If they express an opinion on a subject with which they are not thoroughly familiar, you should embarrass them by some novel question, in order to make them conscious of their error without rudely abashing them.

At the same time they should be made to understand, not by vague words of praise, but by some tangible evidence of approbation, that they are more highly esteemed when they hesitate and ask about that of which they are ignorant than when they decide most wisely. This is the way to instill into them, along with politeness, true modesty and a contempt for the arguments so common among ignorant young persons.

As soon as children's reason seems somewhat developed, their own experience should be used to fortify them against presumption. "You see," you may say, "how much more reasonable you are now than you were a year ago; in another year you will understand things



that to-day you are incapable of comprehending. If a year ago you had wished to decide upon matters with which you are now familiar but of which you were then ignorant, you would have decided badly. You would have been very wrong in pretending to comprehend what was beyond your capacity. It is the same way to-day with the things you have yet to learn : some day you will see how imperfect your present judgments are. In the meantime yield to the counsels of those who think as you yourself will, when you reach their age and experience.

Children's curiosity is a natural bent that prepares the way for instruction : do not fail to avail yourself of it. For example, when they see a mill in the country and wish to know what it is, you should show them how the food that sustains life is prepared. When they see reapers, you should explain to them what the reapers are doing, how wheat is sown, and how it reproduces itself in the ground. In the city they will see shops in which various arts are being carried on and where different kinds of merchandise are being sold. You ought never to be annoyed by their questions ; these are openings offered you by Nature herself to facilitate instruction : show that you take pleasure in them. By such a course you will insensibly teach children how everything that men use and that commerce turns upon, is manufactured. Gradually, without special study, they will learn the right way to make everything that is used by them and the fair price of each article, which is the true basis of economy. Such knowledge, which ought not to be despised by any one, since all need to avoid being cheated in their expenditures, is chiefly necessary for girls.

## CHAPTER IV.

## IMITATION A SOURCE OF DANGER.

THE ignorance of children, whose brains are still devoid of impressions and who have no fixed habits, makes them docile and inclined to imitate everything they see. For this reason it is a cardinal point to offer them good models only. None but those whose example may be useful for them to follow ought to be allowed to come in contact with them; but as, in spite of every precaution you may take, it is impossible to keep them from seeing some objectionable things, their attention must be called, at an early period, to the folly of such vicious and silly persons as have no reputations to be guarded. They must be shown how much and how deservedly despised and how miserable are those who give themselves up to their passions and fail to cultivate reason.

Thus without giving children a habit of sneering, you may form their tastes and make them sensible of the charms of real good behavior.

You must not even refrain from warning them in general terms against particular defects, although you may fear to open their eyes by such a course to the weaknesses of those whom they ought to respect; for besides that it is neither right nor within the bounds of possibility to keep them in ignorance of the true standards of conduct, the surest means of holding them to

their duty is to teach them that the defects of others must be borne with, that we should not even judge of these too hastily, that they often appear greater than they really are, that they are atoned for by good qualities, and that, as there is nothing perfect on the earth, we ought to admire that which has the least imperfections; in short, although such instructions should be reserved for an extremity, nevertheless true principles must be given to children, and they must be prevented from imitating all the evil that meets their eyes.

They must be kept also from mimicking ridiculous persons; for such scornful and theatrical deportment contains an element that is low and contrary to good feeling. Its assumption by children is to be dreaded, because the warmth of their imaginations and the suppleness of their bodies, in connection with their high spirits, enables them to take with ease all sorts of attitudes to depict whatever they see that is laughable.

This inclination to imitate, which is a characteristic of children, produces an infinite number of evils when they are left to the charge of persons destitute of virtue that do not restrain themselves to any great degree in their presence. God, however, gave children this propensity to make them incline readily to whatever is set before them for their good. Often you need only, without saying a word, to show them in another, what you wish them to do.



## CHAPTER V. .

## INDIRECT INSTRUCTION.

I EVEN believe that indirect instructions, which are not so wearisome as lessons and remonstrances, are often all that you need make use of, to call the attention of children to the examples presented them.

One person might occasionally ask another in their presence, "Why do you do this?" and the other might reply, "I do it for such and such a reason." For example, "Why did you confess your fault?" — "Because I would have committed a still greater one in disowning it, like a coward, by a falsehood, and because nothing is nobler than to say frankly, I am wrong." After this, the first person may praise the one that has thus accused himself; but all this must be done without affectation, for children are much more penetrating than one would imagine, and from the moment that they find any artifice in those who control them, they lose the simplicity and confidence which are natural to them.

We have observed that children's brains are perfectly moist and warm, which causes continual movement on their part. This softness of the brain renders it very impressible, and the images made upon it by all objects of sense very vivid: therefore you must hasten to make inscriptions on the brain while characters are readily traced there. But you must choose carefully the images to be engraven on it; for a storehouse so limited and

valuable should be filled only with exquisite things ; it must be kept in mind that nothing should be deposited in the mind in childhood except what you would have remain there throughout the whole of life. The first images graven on the brain while it is yet soft, and has nothing stamped upon it, are the most lasting. Besides, they strengthen as age hardens the brain ; thus they become ineffaceable ; hence it is that when we are old, we distinctly recall the things of youth, though so far away, and on the other hand remember less of what we have seen at a more advanced age, because the impressions of the latter were made on the brain when it was already hardened and covered with other images.

When we are made to listen to such reasoning we find difficulty in giving it credence. Nevertheless, it is true that we reason in the same way ourselves without noticing it. Do we not say every day, "I have taken my bent, I am too old to change, I was brought up after this fashion" ? Besides, do we not feel a peculiar pleasure in recalling the images of youth ? Are not our strongest proclivities those that are formed at this period of life ? Does not all this prove that the first habits are the strongest ? Though infancy is the fit time for stamping images on the brain, it must be acknowledged that it is a time less suited to reasoning. That humidity of the brain which makes impressions easy, being accompanied by great heat, produces an agitation that prevents all protracted application.

A child's brain is like a lighted candle in a place exposed to the wind : its flame constantly flickers. A child asks you a question ; and before you reply, its eyes are raised to the ceiling. It is counting the

figures depicted there, or the panes of glass in the windows; if you try to call its attention back to the first object, you torture it as if you kept it in prison. Therefore the organs of children should be very cautiously dealt with while you are waiting for them to strengthen; reply promptly to their questions and allow them to put others at their pleasure. Only keep up their curiosity and store their memories with a mass of good materials: the time will come when these will arrange themselves, and when, the brain having more consistency, the children will reason consecutively: in the meantime confine yourself to correcting their faulty reasoning, and making them realize not hastily, but as they give you openings, what it is to draw an inference.

Let children play then, and combine instruction with their sports, so that Wisdom may show herself to them only in glimpses and with a smiling countenance; be careful not to weary them by an unwise strictness. If children form a doleful and sombre idea of virtue, if liberty and lack of restraint appear to them in attractive guise, all is lost, your labor will be in vain. Never let them be pleased with petty minds or with persons that lack self-control. We grow to like the behavior and opinions of those we are fond of; the pleasure we first enjoy with those that are not virtuous gradually leads us to esteem even their contemptible qualities.

To make good persons attractive to children, point out their amiable and advantageous traits, their sincerity, their modesty, their disinterestedness, their fidelity, their discretion, but above all their piety, which is the source of all the rest.

If one of these has any offensive characteristics, say,

“Piety is not the cause of these defects ; when it is perfect, it removes or at least softens them.” After all, you need not be obstinately bent on making children fond of those pious persons whose exterior is repulsive.

However well you may keep guard over yourself to prevent them from seeing anything but good in you, do not expect children never to find out your imperfections ; often they will observe even your most trifling errors. St. Augustine tells us that even from infancy he had remarked the vanity of his teachers with regard to their learning. What is better and more urgent for you to do, is to recognize your defects as clearly as the child sees them, and to keep yourself informed of them by sincere friends. Usually those who have charge of children pardon nothing in them, but everything in themselves. This excites a spirit of criticism and spite in the children to such a degree that when they see an error committed by the one who has control of them, they are delighted and seek only to despise her.

Avoid this evil consequence : do not hesitate to speak before children of the defects visible now in you, and the faults you have overcome ; if you find them capable of appreciating reason on the subject, tell them that you are willing to set them the example of correcting their defects by correcting your own. By this means you will derive from your very imperfections something to instruct and benefit them, something to encourage them to self-improvement ; you will also prevent the contempt and disgust that your defects might give them for yourself.

At the same time you must seek every means of making your requirements agreeable to children. Have you

any trying one to propose? explain to them that the pain will soon be followed by pleasure, always show them the utility of the things you teach them, make them understand the use of these in connection with the commerce of the world and the duties of different ranks. Without this knowledge, study will seem to them mere abstract toil, fruitless and painful. "What avails it," they will say to each other, "to learn things that people never mention in conversation, and that have no connection with all that one has to do?" You must, therefore, give them a reason for all your instructions. "My object is," you may tell them, "to fit you to perform well your future tasks, to form your judgments, and to accustom you to reasoning correctly about all the affairs of life." You should ever point them forward to some substantial and desirable end, the thought of which may sustain them in their toil; and never claim to keep them in subjection by a harsh and absolute authority.

In proportion to the development of their reason, you should also discuss with them more and more what is required in their education; not in order to follow out all their ideas, but to take advantage of what they reveal about their true condition, to test their discernment, and to predispose them in favor of what you wish them to do.

Never, except in the last extremity, assume an austere and imperious air, which frightens children. This often proceeds from affectation and pedantry in those that have charge of them; for children, as a rule, are only too timid and bashful. You will close their hearts, and deprive them of confidence, without which no good result is to be hoped for from education. Make yourself



beloved by them, that they may be at ease with you and may not fear to let you perceive their defects. In order to succeed in this, be indulgent to those who do not disguise their true natures in your presence, appear neither surprised nor irritated at their evil inclinations; on the contrary, deal compassionately with their weaknesses. Sometimes this inconvenience will follow, that they will be less restrained by fear, but, everything considered, confidence and sincerity are more advantageous than rigorous authority.

Besides, if confidence and persuasion are not powerful enough, authority will not fail to find its place; but you should always begin with a frank behavior, — cheerful and easy, without undue familiarity, — which will give you the opportunity of seeing children in their natural state and of becoming thoroughly acquainted with them.

Finally, even if you should reduce them by authority to the observance of all your regulations, you would not attain your end; the only result would be burdensome formalities and perhaps hypocrisy. You would give them a distaste for virtue when to inspire a love for it should be your only object.

If the wisest of men has constantly recommended to parents to keep the rod always raised over children, and said that a father that plays with his son shall eventually weep over him, he does not mean to find fault with a gentle and patient training. He condemns only those weak and inconsiderate parents who humor the passions of their children and seek only to entertain themselves with them in their infancy, even to the extent of allowing them to indulge in every kind of excess.

From these considerations it must be concluded that parents ought always to preserve the authority for correction, for there are some dispositions that must be restrained by fear; but — I repeat it — this motive should be employed only when no other will avail.

Children, who as yet act only as fancy dictates and who confound in their minds things that are presented to them in connection with each other, hate study and virtue because of a preconceived aversion to the individual that speaks to them of these subjects. Hence proceeds that sombre and repellent idea of piety which lasts throughout life: frequently this is all that remains of a severe education. Often you should tolerate things that need correction, and await the moment when the child's mind shall be disposed to profit by the correction. Never reprove a child in its first excitement, nor in yours. If you chide in yours, the child will see that you are actuated by temper and hastiness and not by reason and affection; you will lose your authority irretrievably. If you reprove the child in its first excitement, its mind will not be calm enough to confess its fault, to subdue its passion, and to realize the value of your advice; you will even expose the child to the danger of losing the respect due you. Show always that you are master of yourself; nothing will better prove this than your patience. Watch every moment for several days, if necessary, in order to time a correction well. Do not speak of a defect to a child without adding some method of overcoming it that may encourage the attempt, for the mortification and discouragement that cold correction produces must be avoided. If you find a child somewhat reasonable, I think you should



insensibly lead it to ask to be told of its defects : this is the way to point these out without wounding the child. You should never even mention several faults at the same time.

We must take into consideration that children as yet have weak intellects ; that their time of life renders them susceptible only to pleasure ; and often an exactness and a seriousness are demanded of them of which those who require these would be incapable. A dangerous impression of weariness and gloom is made upon their dispositions by speaking to them constantly of words and things that they do not understand, — no liberty, no enjoyment ; always lessons, silence, constrained attitudes, correction, and threats.

The ancients understood the matter far better. It was through the pleasure of poetry and music that the chief branches of knowledge, the maxims of virtue, and refinement of behavior were introduced among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and the Greeks. Persons that are not well read will find difficulty in believing this, so far remote is it from our custom ; yet he who knows anything of history has no room to doubt that such was the common practice for many centuries. Let us, at least, go back in ours to uniting the agreeable with the useful as far as possible.

But, although you cannot expect to dispense wholly with the use of fear for the generality of children, whose natural disposition is unyielding and intractable, it must not be resorted to until all other remedies have been patiently tried. Children should also be made to comprehend clearly the full extent of your requirements, and on what conditions you will be satisfied with them ;

for cheerfulness and confidence must characterize their habitual frame of mind, or their spirit will be crushed and their courage lessened. If they are quick, they will be irritated; if they are slow, they will be made stupid. Fear is like the violent remedies that are employed in critical maladies; these cleanse the system, but impair the constitution, and wear out the organs: a mind controlled by fear is always weaker on that account.

Besides, although it may not be best to be ever threatening without punishing, for fear of making one's threats contemptible, it is, nevertheless, well to punish even less than you threaten. As to the punishment, the pain should be as light as possible, but accompanied by every circumstance that can provoke the child to shame and remorse. For example, speak of all you have done to avoid this extremity; seem to be distressed thereat, talk with others, before the child, of the misfortune of those that so far lack reason and character as to bring punishment on themselves; withdraw the ordinary tokens of affection until you see that consolation is needed; make the punishment public or private according as you think it will be more useful to the child to cause it great shame, or to show it that you spare it that disgrace: reserve this public shame as a last resort; avail yourself, at times, of some discreet person that may console the child, say to it what at that time you ought not yourself to say, heal its false shame, and give it a disposition to return to you, and to whom the child in its emotion can open its heart more freely than it would dare to do before you. But, above all, never seem to demand any but necessary submissions from a child; try to make such requirements that the child will pass

judgment on itself, that it will carry them out with a good grace, and that for you shall remain only the task of softening the pain already accepted. Each one ought to make use of these general rules according to individual needs; human beings, and especially children, are not always consistent: what is wholesome to-day is dangerous to-morrow; a constantly uniform management cannot be advisable.

The fewer formal lessons you can give, the better; an infinite amount of instruction more profitable than lessons proper may be introduced into cheerful conversations. I have known several children that learned to read with the greatest facility: all that is necessary is to tell them pleasing tales taken from books in their presence and to teach them the letters gradually; they will then desire the ability to go themselves to the source from which they derived pleasure.

Two things will spoil everything: these are teaching them to read in Latin first, which takes away all the pleasure of reading, and trying to give them the habit of reading with a forced and ridiculous exaggeration of emphasis; a well-bound book, even gilt-edged, with beautiful pictures and clear print, should be provided. Everything that delights the fancy facilitates study; you must try to select a book full of short and marvellous stories.

After this is done, give yourself no trouble about the child's learning to read; do not even weary it by making it read too carefully; leave it to pronounce naturally, as it talks; other tones are always unpleasant and savor of college declamation. When the tongue becomes loosened, the chest stronger, and the habit of reading greater, the child will read without difficulty, with more grace and more distinctness.

The method of teaching writing should be almost identical. When children already know how to read a little, you can give them the letters to form as an amusement, and if there are several of them together, you should stir up emulation in the matter. Children resort of their own accord to drawing figures upon paper; if you assist this inclination ever so little, without undue constraint, they will form the letters in sport and gradually will accustom themselves to writing. You can even arouse this inclination in them by promising them some recompense that will be to their taste and involve no dangerous consequences. "Write a letter to me," you may say; "write such and such a thing to your brother or your cousin": all this will give pleasure to a child, if no gloomy idea of a regular lesson disturb it. "Free curiosity," says St. Augustine, from his own experience, "awakens the intelligence of children much more than a rule and necessity imposed by fear."

Notice one great defect in education as usually conducted: all the pleasure is placed on one side, all the irksomeness on the other,—all the tediousness in study, all the enjoyment in amusements. What can a child do but endure this rule with impatience and rush eagerly after sports.

Let us, then, try to change this arrangement; let us make study agreeable, let us conceal it under the guise of liberty and pleasure, let us allow children to break in upon their studies sometimes with brief sallies of amusement. They need these distractions to refresh their minds.

Let us suffer their glances to wander a little; let us, even, allow them from time to time some sport or



digression in order that their minds may be relaxed: then lead them gently to the desired end.

Too exact a regularity in requiring uninterrupted study from them, injures children very greatly: often those that have control of them affect this regularity because it is more convenient to themselves than to be bound always to take advantage of every moment. At the same time, let us keep from the diversions of children all that can excite their passions unduly; but all that can refresh the mind, afford an agreeable variety, satisfy the curiosity about useful matters, or exercise the body in fitting arts, should be employed in their recreations. ‡The sports they like best are those in which the body is in motion. They are content if they can only change their place often: a ball or a shuttlecock is enough. So there need be no trouble about their amusements: they will find a plenty for themselves: it is sufficient to allow them to do so; to watch their sports with a cheerful countenance and to moderate these when they grow too violent. †It is well also to make children as sensible as possible of the pleasures that the mind can give; such as conversations, stories, history, and many games of skill that contain some instruction. All these will be of use in their own time, but the taste for them in children must not be forced; you should only offer them some suggestions: after a while their bodies will be less disposed to restlessness and their minds more active. The pains that should be taken to season serious occupations with pleasure will aid greatly in lessening the ardor of youth for dangerous diversions. Constraint and ennui are the cause of so much impatience for entertainment. If a girl were less

wearied by the society of her mother, she would not have such a desire to escape from her to seek less virtuous companions.

In the choice of diversions all doubtful companionships should be avoided; no boys should be allowed with girls, nor even any girls whose dispositions are not steady and safe. Games that excite or divert the passions too much, or that accustom to a physical activity unbecoming in girls, frequent going from home and conversations that give a desire to go frequently, should be avoided. † While we are yet unspoiled by any great pleasure, and have never experienced any ardent passion, we easily find enjoyment: health and innocence are its true sources; but those who have the misfortune to be accustomed to violent delights, lose their taste for simple pleasures and wear themselves out in a restless search after happiness. The taste for amusements may be vitiated in the same way as that for food: a person may become so accustomed to highly flavored dishes that ordinary, simply seasoned food will seem tasteless and insipid. Dread, then, those great convulsions of the soul that prepare the way for ennui and dissatisfaction, especially and to a greater degree are they to be dreaded for children, who offer less resistance to their emotions, and like to be always thrilled. Keep up in them a taste for simple things, so that there may be required neither great preparation of meats to furnish them sustenance, nor of amusements to entertain them. † Moderation always affords sufficient appetite without needing to rouse it by fancy dishes, which lead to intemperance. "Temperance," says one of the ancients, "is the best handmaid of pleasure." With this temper-

ance, which always produces health of body and soul, one is constantly in the enjoyment of a calm and gentle happiness ; one has no need of contrivances, or plays, or expenditure in order to be happy ; a little game invented, a book read, a work undertaken, a walk, or an innocent conversation refreshing after labor, cause purer delight than the most charming music.

Simple pleasures, it is true, are less vivid and keen ; those of another kind elevate the spirit by touching the springs of the passions, but these wear better, they give an equable and enduring satisfaction without any hurtful consequences : they are always beneficent, while other pleasures are like adulterated wines, which at first taste better than the unmixed, but change, and injure the health. The constitution of the soul, as well as the taste, may be injured by the search after such lively and piquant pleasures. All that we can do for the children in our charge is to accustom them to a simple way of living by strengthening the habit thereof for as long a period as possible, by prepossessing them with a dread of the disadvantages attached to other kinds of pleasure, and by not leaving them to themselves as is usually done, at the very age when the passions begin to make themselves felt, and when consequently they most need to be restrained.

It must be acknowledged that of all educational difficulties, none is comparable to the difficulty of training children that lack sensibility. Lively and sensitive natures are capable of frightful errors : passion and presumption carry them away ; but they also possess great resources and often return from their most distant wanderings. Instruction in them is a hidden germ that



grows and sometimes bears fruit when experience comes to the aid of reason and the passions cool. At least, you know how to attract their attention and rouse their curiosity; their natures afford a means of interesting them in your teachings and of piquing them, while on indolent dispositions you have no hold. All the thoughts of the latter run on diversions; they are never where they ought to be; even correction does not touch them to the quick, and though they listen to everything, they are affected by nothing. This indolence makes a child negligent and gives it a distaste for all exertion. It is in such a case that the best education is in danger of proving a failure, unless one is careful to anticipate the evil from earliest infancy. Many persons who reason superficially conclude from this poor success that nature is the only factor in producing men of ability, and that education can accomplish nothing in that respect; instead of which we need only infer that there are some dispositions that are like unfruitful soils, for which cultivation does little. It is still worse when an education of such difficulty is thwarted, or neglected, or badly managed in the beginning.

It must further be observed that there are some dispositions among children that are very deceptive. They seem lovely at first because the charms of early childhood have a glamour that extends over everything; an indescribable tenderness and loveliness attend upon this time of life that prevent a close examination of the individual traits it presents. Whatever intelligence is met with surprises us because it is unexpected at that age. All faults of judgment are tolerated and have the charm of ingenuousness; a certain physical activity that never

fails to appear in childhood is taken for liveliness of mind. Hence it is that childhood seems to promise so much and gives so little. Many a one has been celebrated for his wit at the age of five and has fallen into obscurity and contempt in proportion to his growth. Of all the qualities to be found in children there is only one that can be relied on, that is good reasoning power ; this will always increase with their growth if it be properly cultivated. The charms of childhood disappear, its vivacity dies out, and even its tenderness of heart is often lost, because the influence of the passions and intercourse with politic persons gradually harden young people that mingle with the world. Seek, therefore, to discover, beneath the graces of childhood, if the disposition you have the management of, be lacking in curiosity and but little moved by noble emulation. In such a case it is hard for all those engaged in the training not to become discouraged at once with a labor so fruitless and so trying. All the springs of a child's being should be promptly tried in order to rouse it from this lethargy. If you foresee this difficulty, do not insist at first on continuous instruction ; take care not to overload the memory, for that shocks and stupefies the brain ; do not weary the child with burdensome regulations ; entertain it : when it falls into the opposite extreme from presumption, do not fear to point out its powers ; be content with little ; notice such a child's slightest success ; show it how needlessly it has feared not being able to succeed in things that it does well ; and set emulation to work.

Jealousy is more violent in children than one would think. They are sometimes seen to languish and waste

away with a secret grief, because others are more beloved and caressed than they. Making them suffer this torment is a cruelty too frequent among mothers ; but you should know how to use it, in a pressing necessity, as a remedy for indolence. Lay before the child the fact that you are training other children that do but little better than itself. Any example not proportionate to its weakness will end by discouraging. From time to time give a child little victories over those of whom it is jealous. If you can, induce it to laugh freely with you over its own timidity ; call attention to persons as timid as itself who finally overcame their natural disposition. Teach children by indirect instruction on occasions offered by others that timidity and idleness stifle the mind ; that indolent and careless persons, whatever talent they may possess, weaken their intellects and degrade themselves ; but be very careful not to give these instructions in an austere and impatient tone, for nothing thrusts a weak and timid child back within itself so much as harshness. On the contrary, in such a case, redouble your efforts to flavor the labor from which you cannot save the child with facilities and pleasures adapted to its disposition ; perhaps it may even be necessary from time to time to stir up such a child by contempt and reproaches. You ought not to do this yourself ; some inferior person, such as another child, should do it, seemingly without your knowledge.

St. Augustine tells us that a reproach addressed to St. Monica, his mother, by a servant, in her childhood so impressed her as to correct a bad habit of drinking wine unmixed with water, which the vehemence and severity of her governess had not been able to prevent

her from indulging. In short, we must try to rouse sensibility in the minds of children of this class as we try to rouse it in the body in some diseases. They should be permitted to pursue whatever can overcome their lack of relish, and some fancies should be tolerated in them even at the expense of your rules, provided these fancies do not run to a dangerous excess. To rouse taste in those who possess none is much more difficult than to direct the taste of those that only as yet lack the right kind.

There is another kind of sensibility still more difficult and more important to give to children ; this is susceptibility to affection. As soon as a child is capable of love, there is no longer anything to be considered but how to turn its heart towards those persons that will be of benefit to it. Affection will lead such a child to nearly everything you desire of it ; you have a sure bond to draw it to the good, if you only know how to use the advantage : nothing else remains to be feared except excess in affection or a bad selection of an object. But there are some children that are by nature politic, secretive, and indifferent, so that they secretly connect everything with self. They deceive their parents whom tenderness makes credulous, they pretend to love them, and study their inclinations in order to conform themselves thereto. These children appear more docile than others of the same age, who act according to their feelings without disguise. Their submissiveness, which conceals a rugged will, seems like real amiability ; and their insincere disposition only fully displays itself when it is too late for it to be remedied.

If there be any disposition among children for which



education can effect nothing, we may say that this is the one; and yet it must be confessed that the number of these is greater than one would imagine. Parents cannot make up their minds to believe that their children have badly disposed hearts; and when they will not see this themselves, no one dares undertake to convince them of it, and the evil increases all the time. The best remedy would be to put children, from the very first, at perfect liberty to show their inclinations.

It is necessary always to understand them thoroughly before correcting them. They are naturally simple and open; but if you restrain them or set them the example of concealment, they return no more to that first simplicity. God alone, indeed, bestows tenderness and kindness of heart: we can only try to excite them by generous examples, by principles of honor and disinterestedness, and by a contempt for those who love themselves too much. At an early age, before they have lost the first simplicity of the more spontaneous emotions, you should try to get children to taste the pleasure of a cordial and reciprocal affection. Nothing will aid in this so much as surrounding them at first with persons that never manifest any trait that is harsh, false, low, or selfish. It would be better to allow persons around them that have other defects but are free from these. Children should also be praised for all to which affection incites them, provided the affection be not too misplaced or too ardent. Their parents should seem, also, full of sincere love for them; for children often learn, from their parents themselves, to love nothing. Finally, I would have you suppress before them with your friends all superfluous compliments, all feigned

demonstrations of affection, and all deceitful caresses, by which you would teach them to repay those to whom they owe love with vain semblances of affection.

The opposite failing to the one we have just been describing is much more frequent among girls ; that is, becoming excited about the most indifferent matters. They cannot see two persons at variance without taking sides in their hearts with one against the other. They are entirely filled with groundless likes and dislikes ; they perceive no defect in one whom they esteem and no good quality in one whom they despise. They should not be opposed in this at first, for contradiction strengthens these fancies, but little by little, a young person should be led to realize that you see more clearly than she herself, all the good there is in the one she loves and all the evil there is in the one that is offensive to her. At the same time take care to make her feel on occasion the disadvantage of the defects found in the person that charms her, and the advantage of the useful qualities met with in the one that displeases her. Do not urge the matter ; you will find that she will recover of her own accord. After this, direct her attention to the most unreasonable circumstances of her past infatuations, tell her kindly that she will regard those of which she is not yet cured in the same light when they are over. Describe to her similar errors into which you fell at her age. Above all, show her, as clearly as you can, the great intermixture of good and evil to be found in all that one can love or hate, in order to abate the ardor of her likes and dislikes.

Never promise children ornaments or dainties as rewards ; to do so produces two evils : first, that of

inspiring them with esteem for that which they ought to despise; second, that of depriving you of the power of establishing other rewards that would assist you in your labors. Beware of threatening children in order to make them study, or of fettering them by any fixed regulations. You should make as few rules as possible; and when you cannot avoid laying down one, you should pass it off pleasantly without giving it the name of a rule, always showing some adequate reason for doing a thing at one time and place rather than at another.

If you never praise children when they do well, you run the risk of discouraging them. Though it may be that praises are to be feared as a source of vanity, you should try to use them so as to animate children without intoxicating them. We see that St. Paul often employs praise to encourage the weak, and to make correction pass off more pleasantly. The Fathers of the Church used it in the same way. Of course, to make it useful, it must be tempered in such a manner as to deprive it of exaggeration and flattery, and at the same time every thing good must be referred to God as its source. Children may also be rewarded by innocent games involving some ingenuity, by walks in which conversation need not be fruitless, and by little gifts that may be used as prizes; such as pictures, engravings, medals, maps, or fine books.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE USE OF STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

CHILDREN are passionately fond of amusing stories ; we constantly see them transported with pleasure or shedding tears at the recital of the adventures related to them : do not fail to profit by this inclination. When you find them disposed to listen to you, repeat to them some short and pretty fable, but choose some of the fables about animals which are innocent and ingenious : give them for what they are, and show their serious aim. As for heathen fables, a girl will be fortunate if she remains in ignorance of those all her life, for they are impure and full of impious absurdities. If you cannot keep a child in ignorance of them altogether, instil an abhorrence of them. When you have told one fable, wait until the child asks you to tell others ; thus leave it always hungry, as it were, to learn more of them. When curiosity has been excited, relate certain select stories, but in few words ; connect these together and put off telling the conclusion from day to day in order to keep the children in suspense and to make them impatient to know the end. Enliven your recitals by spirited and natural tones of voice ; make all your characters talk : children with lively imaginations will fancy that they see and hear them. For example, relate the story of Joseph ; make his brothers speak like brutes, Jacob like a tender and bereaved father ; let Joseph

himself speak; let him seem to take pleasure, when ruler in Egypt, in concealing himself from his brothers, in frightening them, and then in making himself known. This natural presentation, added to the wonderful character of the story, will charm a child if you have not overburdened it with similar recitals, if you have allowed it to long for them, if you have neither given them the appearance of study nor compelled the child to repeat them: such repetitions, unless children take to them of their own accord, are irksome to them and take away all the charm from stories of this kind.

Nevertheless, it must be observed that if a child has some fluency of speech, it will naturally be disposed to repeat to those it loves the stories that have given it most pleasure; but do not make this a requirement. You may avail yourself of some one who will be at ease with the child and who will seem to wish to learn the story from it. The child will be delighted to repeat the narrative. Do not seem to be listening, and allow it to speak without correcting mistakes. When a child becomes more accustomed to narration, you may point out pleasantly the best way to tell a story, which is to make it brief, simple, and natural, by the selection of those circumstances that best show the nature of each incident. If you have several children under your care, accustom them by degrees to acting the parts of the characters whose histories they have learned: let one be Abraham, and another Isaac. These representations will delight them more than games, will accustom them to think and talk on serious subjects with pleasure, and will impress these narratives ineffaceably upon their memories.

You should try to give children more taste for sacred

stories than for any others, not by telling them that these are more beautiful, — for perhaps they would not believe that, — but by making them feel it without your saying it. Point out to them how important, peculiar, and wonderful these narratives are, how full of natural descriptions and a noble animation. The stories of the Creation, of Adam's fall, of the deluge, of the calling of Abraham, of the offering of Isaac, of the adventures of Joseph upon which we have touched, and of the birth and flight of Moses, are not only suited to rouse the curiosity of children, but by showing them the origin of religion, they lay a foundation for it in their minds. One must be profoundly ignorant of the essential feature of religion not to see that it is altogether historical; it is from a series of wonderful facts that we get its establishment, its perpetuity, and all that ought to lead us to its practice and belief. It must not be imagined that a wish to induce persons to plunge too deep into learning is implied by proposing these stories; they are short, varied, and suited to please the most ordinary individuals. God, who best knows the mind of man whom he created, has embodied religion in these every-day facts which, far from overburdening the simple, help them to grasp and retain the mysteries. For example, tell a child that, in the Godhead, three equal persons constitute one single being; by dint of hearing and repeating these phrases, it will retain them in its memory; but I doubt if it will have a conception of their meaning. But tell it how, when Jesus Christ came up from the waters of the Jordan, the Father sent a voice from heaven saying: — "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"; add that the

Holy Ghost descended upon the Saviour in the form of a dove, and you will make the child clearly see the Trinity in a story never to be forgotten. Here are three persons that the child will always distinguish on account of the difference in their actions. You have only to teach it that all these together constitute but one God. This example suffices to show the utility of such stories: although they seem to prolong instruction, they really shorten it very much and avoid the dryness of catechisms, in which the mysteries are detached from the facts. Therefore we find that of old they taught by means of stories. The admirable way in which St. Augustine would have all the ignorant taught, is not a method introduced by that Father alone, but was the universal practice and theory of the Church. It consisted in showing, from the course of history, that religion is as ancient as the world itself. Christ expected in the Old Testament and Christ reigning in the New, is the basis of Christian instruction.

This demands a little more time and pains than the instructions to which most persons confine themselves; but religion is really known when these incidents are known; and on the other hand, when we are not acquainted with them, we have only confused ideas of Christ, of the Gospel, of the Church, of the necessity for absolute submission to her decrees, and of the loftiness of the virtues which ought to be inspired in us by the name Christian. The "Historical Catechism," printed a short time ago, which is a simple book, short and much more clear than ordinary catechisms, includes all of these stories that need be known: so none can say that we require too much study. Its design is the



same as that of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, except that the "Council Catechism" is a little too full of theological terms for uneducated persons.

Add to the stories of which I have spoken for children, the passage of the Red Sea and the sojourn of the people in the wilderness, where they ate bread that fell from heaven and drank water that Moses made to flow from a rock by striking it with his rod. Describe the miraculous conquest of the promised land when the waters of the Jordan flowed back towards their source and the walls of a city fell of their own accord at the sight of their assailants. Represent vividly the combat of Saul and David; show them the latter, youthful, unarmed, and clothed in shepherd's garb, the conqueror of the proud giant Goliath. Do not forget the glory and wisdom of Solomon; describe him deciding between the two women that disputed about a child; but picture him, also, falling from the height of his wisdom and dishonoring himself by voluptuousness, the almost inevitable consequence of too great prosperity. Describe the prophets speaking to the king in God's name. Tell of their reading the future like an open book; and make them appear humble, austere, and constantly undergoing persecution for speaking the truth. Bring in at the right point the first overthrow of Jerusalem; show them how the temple was burned and the holy city destroyed on account of the sins of the people. Tell the story of the captivity of Babylon, during which the Jews wept for their beloved Zion. Before telling of their return, relate in passing the thrilling adventures of Tobias, of Judith, of Esther, and of Daniel. It might not even be without profit to make children express

themselves about the characters of these saints to find out which ones they like best. One might prefer Esther, another, Judith; and this would excite a little argument between them that would impress these stories more forcibly upon their minds and form their judgments. Then lead the people back to Jerusalem and make them rebuild her ruins; draw a smiling picture of her peace and happiness.

Immediately after this portray the cruel and impious Antiochus who died in a hypocritical penitence; describe the victories of the Maccabees under this persecutor and the martyrdom of seven brothers of one name. Proceed to the miraculous birth of St. John; speak more in detail of that of Christ, after which you should select from the Evangelists all the most striking scenes of his life: his teaching in the temple at the age of twelve, his baptism, his retreat into the desert, and his temptation; the calling of his apostles, the multiplication of the loaves, and the conversion of the woman that was a sinner, who anointed the Saviour's feet with perfume, bathed them with her tears, and wiped them with her tresses. Tell them also how the Samaritan woman was instructed, he that was born blind healed, Lazarus raised from the dead, and how Christ entered triumphant into Jerusalem. Describe his passion, and picture his rising from the tomb; then call their attention to his familiar intercourse with his disciples for forty days, even until they saw him ascend to heaven. The descent of the Holy Ghost, the stoning of St. Stephen, the conversion of St. Paul, the calling of the centurion, Cornelius, the journeys of the apostles, and particularly of St. Paul, are very interesting. Choose

the most wonderful of the stories of the martyrs, and some general facts about the spotless life of the early Christians; bring in the courage of the young virgins, the most astounding severities of the anchorites, the conversion of the emperors and the empire, the blindness of the Jews, and their terrible punishment which is still going on.

All these stories, discreetly dealt out, would agreeably fill the lively and tender imagination of childhood with the whole course of religion from the creation of the world down to our day, and give children a lofty idea of its nature that could never be effaced. They would perceive, also, in this history, the hand of God ever raised to deliver the righteous and to confound the wicked. They would become accustomed to seeing God the sole agent in all things, and secretly bending to his purposes the creatures that seem most remote therefrom. In these recitals there should be brought together all that can afford the most pleasing and magnificent pictures, because every means should be employed to lead children to find religion beautiful, attractive, and impressive, instead of which they ordinarily conceive of it as something gloomy and melancholy.

Besides the inestimable advantage of thus teaching children religion, this foundation of interesting stories, that you lay in their memories at an early day, awakens their curiosity about serious matters, renders them capable of the pleasures of the intellect, and interests them in what they hear said of other stories that have some connection with those they are already familiar with. But once more, you must guard well against ever laying down a law about hearing or remembering



these stories, still less should you make them regular lessons ; pleasure must accomplish all. Do not press these stories on children, you will attain your object with them even in the case of ordinary minds ; the only point is not to burden these too heavily, and to let their curiosity awake gradually. But, you will say, how are these stories to be related to them in a lively, brief, natural, and agreeable way ? Where are the governesses that can do this ? To that I reply, that I propose such a plan with no other purpose than to have you try to select persons of talent to take charge of children, and to instil into them, as far as you can, this method of teaching : each governess will carry it out according to the measure of her intelligence. But, after all, however little talent governesses may possess, the matter will turn out less badly when they are trained to this simple and natural method.

They may add to their narrations the sight of engravings or pictures that present these sacred stories attractively. Engravings will answer, and you should avail yourself of them for ordinary use ; but when you have an opportunity of showing children some good pictures, it must not be neglected, — for the power of color added to the grandeur of life-size figures will strike the imagination more forcibly.

## CHAPTER VII.

METHOD OF INSTILLING THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF  
RELIGION.

WE have remarked that the first period of childhood is not adapted to the exercise of reason: not that children do not already possess all the ideas and all the general principles of reason that they will have later, but because, for want of a knowledge of many facts, they cannot apply their reason, and also because the agitation of their brains prevents them from following out and connecting their thoughts.

It is, nevertheless, necessary, without pressing them, to turn the first use of their reason gently towards finding out God. Persuade them to believe the truths of Christianity without giving them any grounds for doubt. When they see some one die or know that some one is buried, say to them: "Is the dead person in the tomb?" — "Yes." "He is not in paradise, then?" — "Excuse me, but he is." "How can he be in the tomb and in paradise at the same time?" — "It is his soul that is in paradise, but his body that was laid in the ground." "His soul is not his body, then?" — "No." "His soul is not dead, then?" — "No, it will live forever in heaven." Add: "And do you wish to be saved?" — "Yes." "But what is it to be saved?" — "It is to have your soul go to paradise when you die." "And what is death?" — "It is the soul's quitting the body, and the body's crumbling to dust."

I do not claim that you can get children to answer thus at first ; yet I can affirm that several have made similar responses to me at the age of four : but I will suppose a mind less receptive and more backward ; your last resource is to wait patiently a few years longer.

You should show children a house, and teach them to understand that this house did not build itself. The stones, you may tell them, were not raised without some one's lifting them. It is, also, well to show them masons at work building : then call their attention to the sky, the earth, and the chief things therein which God has made for the use of man. Say to them : " See how much more beautiful and more skilfully constructed the world is than a house. Did it make itself ? Undoubtedly not ; God made it with his own hands."

Follow at first the method of Scripture : appeal vividly to their imaginations ; set nothing before them that is not clothed with striking imagery. Represent God as seated upon a throne, with eyes more brilliant than the rays of the sun and more piercing than the flashes of the lightning. Describe him as speaking ; give him ears that hear everything, hands that uphold the universe, arms ever raised to punish the wicked, and a tender and fatherly heart to make those that love him happy. The time will come for you to render all this information more accurate. Notice every opening presented you by the child's intellect ; sound it in various places to find out where grand truths can best effect an entrance. Above all, never tell a child of anything novel without making it seem familiar by some obvious comparison.

For instance, ask a child if it would rather die than

renounce Christ. It will answer, "Yes." Then add: "What! You would be willing to have your head cut off, in order to enter paradise?" — "Yes." Up to this point the child believes that it would have courage enough for this. But if you wish to make it realize that one can do nothing without divine grace, you will gain nothing by simply saying that we need grace to be faithful: it will not understand all those words; and if you teach it to repeat them, without understanding them, you have made no progress in your undertaking. "What then shall you do?" Relate the story of St. Peter; represent him as saying in a presumptuous tone, "Though I should die, I will follow thee; though all others should leave thee, I will never forsake thee."

Then depict his fall: he denies Christ three times, a maid-servant frightens him. Tell why God permitted him to be so weak; then make use of a comparison with an infant or a sick person who cannot walk alone, and make the child understand that we need that God should carry us as a nurse carries an infant; thus you will make clear the mystery of divine grace.

But the truth most difficult to explain is that we have souls more precious than our bodies. We teach children from the first to speak of their souls, and it is well to do so; for this language which they do not understand nevertheless accustoms them to assume in a confused way, the distinction between body and soul, which they will afterwards be able to comprehend. As the prepossessions of childhood are hurtful when they lead to error, so they are advantageous when they accustom the imagination to the truths to which the reason cannot yet direct it by means of rules. But in the end, a real

faith must be established. How can this be done? By plunging a young girl into the subtleties of philosophy? Nothing is so fatal. You must limit yourself to making as clear and real as possible to her mind what she hears and says every day.

As to her body, she is only too conscious of it; everything leads her to gratify it, to adorn it, and to make it her idol. The main point is to inspire her with contempt for it by showing her something in herself that is nobler.

Say, then, to a child in whom reason is already active: "Is it your soul that eats?" Do not scold it if it make the wrong response; but tell it gently that the soul does not eat. Say: "It is the body that eats; it is the body that is like the animals. Have animals any souls? Do they possess knowledge?" The child will answer, "No." "But they eat," continue, "although they have no souls. You see plainly, then, that it is not the soul that eats, it is the body that takes food for its nourishment, that walks and sleeps." "And what does the soul do?" — "The soul reasons, recognizes people; likes certain things and regards others with dislike." Add, as if in sport, "Do you see this table?" — "Yes." "You recognize it then?" — "Yes." "You see clearly that it is not made like this chair; you are sure that it is made of wood, and that it is not like this mantel, which is made of stone?" "Yes," the child will reply. Do not go farther until you are satisfied from the expression of its voice and eyes that these simple truths have made an impression. Then say, "But does this table recognize you?" You will see that the child will begin to laugh in ridicule of this question. No matter,



go on, "Which loves you best, this table or this chair?" The child will laugh again; but continue, "Is this window very wise?" Then try to go a little farther: "Does this doll answer when you speak to it?" — "No." "Why? Has it no soul?" — "No, it has none." "It is not like you then, for you have knowledge of it, but it has no knowledge of you. But will you not be like this doll after death, when you are beneath the ground?" — "Yes." "You will no longer feel anything?" — "No." — "You will no longer know any one?" — "No." "And your soul will be in heaven?" — "Yes." "Will it not see God there?" — "Certainly." "And where is the soul of the doll now?" You will see that the child will answer you with a smile or, at least, will give you to understand that the doll has no soul.

Upon such a basis and by similar effective little devices, you can gradually accustom children to ascribe to the body that which belongs to it, and to the soul that which proceeds from it, provided that you do not indiscreetly go to bringing up certain actions that belong to soul and body in common. Subtleties that might confuse these truths should be avoided, and you should content yourself with distinguishing clearly those things in which the difference between soul and body is more distinctly marked.

Perhaps you may find some minds so dull that, even with good instruction, they cannot fully understand these truths, but besides the fact that it is possible to comprehend a subject well enough without being able to explain it clearly, God sees, in the mind of man, better than we, what he has placed there for the comprehension of his mysteries. As to those children in



whom one perceives an intelligence capable of going farther, it is possible, without launching them on study that savors too much of philosophy, to make them comprehend, according to the extent of their capacity, what is meant when they are taught to say that God is a spirit and their souls spirits also. I think the best and simplest way to give them an idea of this spiritual nature of God and the human soul, is to make them note the distinction between a dead man and a living one: in the one case there is only a body, in the other the body is united with a spirit. After that they must be taught that the part that reasons is much more perfect than the part that has only shape and movement. Then impress upon them, by different examples, that no body perishes, but only decomposes; thus the particles of burnt wood fall in ashes or are carried off as smoke. If, therefore, you may add, that which is in essence only ashes, incapable of knowing and thinking, never perishes, with much more reason will our souls, which know and think, never cease to exist. The body may die; that is to say, it may part with the soul and turn to dust; but the soul will live on, for it will always think.

Those who teach children ought to develop in their minds as far as possible this knowledge, which is the basis of all religion; but when they cannot succeed in doing so, instead of finding fault with slow and inert minds, they should trust that God will enlighten them inwardly. There is also one effective and practical way to strengthen this appreciation of the distinction between soul and body; that is, to give children the habit of esteeming the one and despising the other in every detail of behavior. Praise learning, which nourishes and

develops the soul ; hold in esteem those lofty truths that animate it with wisdom and virtue ; have a contempt for high living, dress, and all that pampers the body ; make them feel how far honor, a good conscience, and religion are above all sensual pleasures. By such sentiments, without reasoning at all about soul and body, the ancient Romans taught their children to despise the latter and to sacrifice it in order to afford the soul the delights of virtue and glory. Among them, not only those of noble birth but all the people were naturally temperate, disinterested, full of contempt for life, and peculiarly alive to honor and wisdom. When I speak of the ancient Romans I mean those who lived before the increase of their dominions had marred the simplicity of their customs.

Let no one say that it is impossible to give children such sentiments by means of education. How many principles opposed to the dictates of the judgment do we see established among us by the force of custom? Take for example the duel, based upon a pretended law of honor. It was not from reasoning on the subject, but from assuming the principle of the duel to be based on a point of honor without reasoning, that people risked their lives, and that every swordsman lived in constant peril. He who had no quarrel was liable to be involved in one at any moment with parties who sought a pretext to distinguish themselves in some combat. However peaceably disposed a man might be, he could not, without losing this false honor, avoid a quarrel by an explanation or refuse to be second to the first comer that wished to fight. What authority has been necessary to root out this barbarous custom ! See, then, how power-

ful are the prejudices produced by education! They will be of still more value in behalf of virtue, if they are supported by reason and the hope of the kingdom of heaven. The Romans, of whom we have already spoken, and before them the Greeks, in the golden age of their republics, brought up their children in a contempt for display and luxury. They taught them to value nothing but glory, to aspire, not to possess wealth, but to conquer kings that possessed it, and to believe that no one could be happy except through virtue. This spirit was so firmly established in those republics that in accordance with these principles, so opposed to those of other nations, they accomplished incredible things. The example of so many martyrs and other early Christians of every age and rank, shows that the grace of baptism, in addition to the help given by education, may have a still more wonderful effect upon the faithful in making them look with contempt upon all that appertains to the body. Seek then all the most agreeable devices and most striking illustrations to show children that our bodies are akin to the brutes and our souls to the angels. Describe a rider mounted on a horse and guiding it; tell them that the soul is to the body what the rider is to the horse. Draw the inference, in conclusion, that a soul is very weak and unfortunate when it allows itself to be carried away by its body as by an unruly horse that hurls it over a precipice. Teach them further, that physical beauty is a flower that blooms in the morning, and at evening is withered and trampled under foot; but that the soul is the image of the immortal beauty of God. There is, you may add, an order of things so much more excellent that they cannot be

seen with the gross eye of flesh by means of which we view all that is here below, subject to change and corruption. In order to make children realize that there are some very real things that eyes and ears cannot perceive, you must ask them if it is not true that such a one is wise and such another talented. When they shall have answered, "Yes," say: "But have you seen his wisdom? What color is it? have you heard it? does it make much noise? have you touched it? is it cold or warm?" The children will laugh, as they will also do at similar questions about the soul; they will seem perfectly astonished to be asked the color of a soul and whether it is round or square. Then you can make them observe that they are, therefore, acquainted with some very real things that can neither be seen, touched, nor heard, and that these things are of a spiritual nature. But you should enter very moderately into such discussions with girls. I only suggest them here for the sake of those whose curiosity and reasoning power will lead you to such topics in spite of yourself. You must be governed by their talent and their needs.

Restrain their minds as much as possible within ordinary bounds, and teach them that there should be, in their sex, a modesty about learning almost as delicate as that which inspires them with a horror of vice.

The imagination must be brought to the aid of the intellect in order to give children attractive conceptions of those truths of religion which the body cannot perceive. The glory of heaven must be painted for them as St. John represents it to us — the tears wiped away from every eye, no more death, no more sorrow nor crying; lamentations will have passed away, and misfortunes



be over ; an eternal joy will flow over the heads of the blessed as the waters cover the head of a man immersed in the depth of the sea. Picture to them that glorious Jerusalem, of which God himself will be the sun that there endless day may reign ; a river of peace, a torrent of delights, a fountain of life shall water this city ; there all shall be gold, pearls, and precious stones. I well know that all these images pertain to objects of sense ; but after the attention of children has been attracted by this beautiful representation, the means we have indicated may be used to recall them to spiritual things.

Draw the inference that here below we are like travellers in an inn or under a tent ; that the body is going to perish ; that its decay can only be delayed for a few years ; but that the soul will take her flight to that celestial mother country, where she is to live forever in the life of God. If the habit of contemplating these sublime themes with pleasure, and of judging common matters from their connection with such lofty hopes, can be given to children, an infinite number of difficulties will be smoothed away.

I should like, also, to try to give them some vivid impressions about the resurrection of the body. Teach them that nature is but a universal order established by God in his works, and that miracles are only exceptions to these general rules ; that, therefore, it costs God no more to work a hundred miracles than it costs me to leave my bedroom a quarter of an hour before the time at which I am accustomed to leave it. After this, recall to their minds the story of the resurrection of Lazarus ; then, that of the resurrection of Christ and his familiar appearances to so many persons within forty days.

Finally, show them that it cannot be difficult for him that created man to create him anew. Do not omit the comparison to the grain of wheat which is sown in the ground and made to decay that it may live again and multiply.

The point in question, however, is not to teach children these moral principles by rote, as the catechism is taught them ; such a method would only result in turning religion into an affected form of speech, or at least into a collection of tedious formalities. Only aid their own intelligence, and put them in the way of finding these truths in the depths of their own being. By this means the truths referred to will be more their own and more attractive, and will be more vividly impressed upon the mind. Profit by the opportunities offered for making clear to them what as yet they perceive only in a confused way.

But bear in mind that nothing is so dangerous as speaking with contempt of this life to children, without proving by every detail of your behavior that you are in earnest. Example has astonishing power over us at every age, but in childhood this power is unlimited. Children greatly enjoy imitating ; they have not yet formed the habits that render the imitation of others difficult ; and furthermore, being incapable of judging for themselves concerning the essential qualities of things, they decide about them from what they see in those that suggest them rather than from the reasons by which they are supported. Actions, indeed, are more impressive than words. If, then, children see a person do the reverse of what he teaches them, they become accustomed to looking upon religion as a beautiful ceremony, and upon virtue as an impracticable idea.



Never take the liberty of jesting with children about what pertains to religion. Many will make fun of the devotion of some simple soul, and laugh at the points about which he consults his confessor, or at the penances that are imposed upon him. You think that all this is innocent, but you deceive yourself; everything makes a precedent in this matter. God and what relates to his worship should never be spoken of except with a seriousness and respect very far removed from such license. Never relax with regard to any point of decorum, but especially with regard to these. Often they that are most scrupulous about propriety in worldly affairs are coarsest with regard to religious matters.

When children shall have reflected enough to know themselves and to recognize God in themselves, connect the historical facts with which they are already familiar with this knowledge; this intermixture will reveal to them the whole of religion brought together in their minds. They will notice with pleasure the connection that exists between their reflections and the history of the human race. They will recognize that man was not made for himself; that his soul is the image of God; that his body was endowed with so many admirable resources by a divine power and industry; at once they will recall the story of the creation. Later they will reflect that they were born with inclinations opposed to reason, that they are deceived by pleasure, carried away by anger, and that their bodies hurry along their souls as an unruly horse carries off his rider, instead of which the soul ought to control the body. They will perceive the cause of the disorder in Adam's sin; the story of which will make them expect the Saviour who is to

reconcile men with God. Here you have the whole foundation of religion.

In order to make them understand better the mysteries, actions, and principles of Jesus Christ, young people should be induced to read the Gospel. They should therefore be prepared in good time to read the word of God as they are prepared to receive the body of Christ in the communion. The authority of the Church, the spouse of the Son of God and the mother of all the faithful, should be established as the chief foundation of this preparation. She must be heard, you should say, because the Holy Spirit has enlightened her that she may explain the Scriptures to us: no one can come to Christ but through her. Do not fail to read over often with children the passages in which Jesus Christ promises to sustain and strengthen the Church that she may lead her children in the way of truth. Especially instil into girls that sober and temperate discretion that St. Paul recommends; teach them to dread the snare of novelty, the love of which is so natural to their sex; prepossess them with a salutary horror of all singularity in religion; set before them that heavenly perfection and wonderful discipline that reigned among the early Christians; teach them to blush for our laxity; and make them long for that evangelical purity; but keep them, with extreme care, from every thought of presumptuous criticism and indiscreet reform.

Be desirous then of setting before their eyes the Gospel and the noble examples of antiquity, but not until you have proved their docility and the simplicity of their faith. Return constantly to the subject of the Church; show them, in addition to the promises made to her

and the authority given her in the Gospel, the progress of all the centuries through which the Church has preserved, amid so many battles and revolutions, an inviolable succession of clergy and doctrine, which is a manifest fulfilment of the divine promises. If you lay a foundation of humility, submission, and aversion to any questionable singularity, you may present to young people with very good results all that is most perfect in the law of God, in the institution of the sacraments, and in the customs of the early Church. I know you cannot hope to give such instructions in their fullest extent — to all classes of children ; I only suggest them here that you may give them as exactly as you may be able in view of the age and disposition of the minds you would instruct.

Superstition is undoubtedly to be feared for women, but nothing uproots it or prevents it more effectually than good instruction. This instruction, although it should be kept within proper bounds and be very far removed from the researches of the learned, should go farther than is ordinarily thought. Many a one thinks herself well informed who is not at all so, and whose ignorance is so great that she is not even in a condition to realize how far she falls short of comprehending the — groundwork of Christianity. Never confuse with faith or the practices of piety anything that is not either drawn from the Gospel or authorized by the constant approval of the Church. Children should be carefully warned against certain abuses which are so common that one is tempted to regard them as parts of the present discipline of the Church, if one is not well informed. We cannot be entirely insured against these

abuses unless we go back to their source, study their institution and the use that the saints made of them.

Teach girls, who are naturally too credulous, not to accept lightly certain unauthorized traditions and not to devote themselves to certain observances that an indiscreet zeal has introduced without awaiting the approval of the Church. The right way to teach them what they ought to think on such subjects, is not to criticise severely practices often having piety as the motive of their introduction ; but, without finding fault with these, to show that they do not rest on a solid foundation. Be content with never allowing these matters to make a part of the instructions that you give about Christianity. Such a silence will suffice to accustom children to conceive of Christianity in all its completeness and perfection without adding to it these observances. As you go along, you may quietly prepare them for the arguments of Calvinists. I think such instruction will not be useless since we are constantly brought in contact with persons holding their views and speaking of them in the most familiar conversations.

“They impute to us wrongly,” you may say, “such excess about images, about the invocation of saints, about prayer for the dead, and about indulgences.” Consider what the Church really teaches about baptism, confirmation, the offering of the mass, penance, confession, the authority of priests and that of the Pope, who is the first among them by the institution of Jesus Christ himself, and whose authority one cannot disclaim without quitting the Church. This is all that need be believed ; what the Calvinists accuse us of adding thereto is not Catholic doctrine ; it is putting an obstacle in



the way of their reunion with us to desire to make them yield to opinions that are disagreeable to them and that the Church disavows, as if these opinions were a part of our faith. At the same time never fail to point out how the Calvinists have rashly condemned the most ancient and sacred customs. Say also, that new institutions, when in conformity with the ancient spirit, deserve profound respect, since the authority that establishes them is that of the immortal spouse of the Son of God.

In speaking thus of those who have torn a part of the flock away from their former shepherds under the pretext of reform, be sure to set forth how these proud men have forgotten the weakness of humanity and made religion impracticable for all simple minds, by wishing to oblige every individual to examine for himself all the articles of Christian doctrine in the Scriptures without submitting to the interpretations of the Church. Represent Holy Scripture as the sovereign rule of faith among believers. Tell them that we recognize, no less than heretics, that the Church ought to give way to the Scriptures; but we teach that the Holy Spirit assists the Church to explain the Scriptures properly. It is not that we prefer the Church to the Scriptures, but the interpretation of the Scriptures made by the whole Church to our individual interpretation. Is it not the height of pride and temerity for an individual to fear that the Church will be deceived in her judgment, and not to fear being deceived himself in deciding against her?

Inspire children with a desire to know the reason of all the ceremonies and words that constitute divine service and the administration of the sacraments. Show

them the baptismal font ; let them witness baptisms ; on the Thursday before Easter, let them see how the holy oil is made ; and on Saturday how the water in the fonts is blessed. Give them a taste, not for sermons full of vain and affected figures, but for sensible and edifying discourses, such as good exhortations and homilies that make them better understand the words of the Gospel. Call their attention to the beautiful and touching simplicity to be found in such teaching, and fill them with love for the parish where the pastor speaks with consecration and authority, however little talent or force he may display. Teach them also to love and respect all those communities that co-operate in the service of the Church ; never allow them to ridicule the dress or condition of those devoted to a holy life ; tell them of the sanctity of these orders, the benefit derived by religion therefrom, and the vast number of Christians who advance in these holy retreats to a perfection that is almost impracticable in the midst of the engagements of the world. Accustom the imaginations of children to hearing death spoken of, to seeing without alarm a pall, an open tomb, even sick persons in the act of dying and those already dead, if you can do so without exposing them to a shock from fright.

Nothing is more vexatious than to see so many persons of intelligence unable to think of death without shuddering. Others turn pale at finding themselves among thirteen guests at table, or at having had certain dreams, or at having upset a salt-cellar. The fear of all these imaginary omens is a gross remnant of paganism : show their folly and absurdity. Although women have not the same opportunities to display their courage as men,



they ought to possess that virtue. Cowardice is contemptible everywhere, and everywhere attended by evil results. A woman should be able to resist foolish fears ; she must be steadfast against unforeseen dangers, and should neither weep nor be terrified except on great occasions, and even then should be sustained by virtue. No Christian of either sex has a right to be a coward. The soul of Christianity, if I may thus express myself, is contempt for this world and love for the other.

## CHAPTER VIII.

INSTRUCTION ON THE DECALOGUE, THE SACRAMENTS,  
AND PRAYER.

JESUS CHRIST, the author and finisher of our faith, the centre of all religion, and our only hope, is the object which it is of prime importance to keep ever before the eyes of children. I will not undertake to say here, how the mystery of his incarnation should be taught them; for such an undertaking would carry me too far, and there are books enough in which can be found exactly what ought to be taught on the subject. After the principles are fixed, all the judgments and actions of the person one instructs should be modelled after Jesus Christ himself, who assumed a mortal body only for the purpose of teaching us how to live, and to die by showing us in his flesh, which was like ours, all that we ought to believe and practise. Not that it is necessary to be comparing every moment a child's opinions and actions with the life of Christ; such comparison would become wearisome and be indiscreet: but children must be taught to regard the life of Christ as our example, and his word as our law. Select from his discourses and actions what is most appropriate for a child. If it gets impatient at suffering some inconvenience, recall the memory of Christ upon the cross; if it cannot resign itself to some disagreeable task, point it to Christ laboring in a shop up to the age of thirty;

if it longs to be praised and esteemed, speak of the opprobrium heaped upon our Saviour; if it cannot harmonize with surrounding persons, lead it to consider Christ conversing with sinners and with the most abominable hypocrites; if it displays any resentment, hasten to depict Christ dying upon the cross for the very ones who caused his death; if it allows itself to be carried away by an indecorous gayety, describe the gentleness and moderation of Christ, whose whole life was so sedate and serious. In short, lead a child to picture to itself often what Christ would think and say, if he were still visible in our midst, about our conversations, our amusements, and our most serious occupations. "What would be our consternation," you may continue, "if he should suddenly appear in the midst of us when we are most forgetful of his law! But is not this what will happen to each one of us at death, and to the entire world when the hidden hour of the General Judgment shall arrive?" Then you should depict the overthrow of the machinery of the universe, the sun obscured, the stars falling from their places, the burning elements flowing away like rivers of flame, and the foundations of the earth shaken to the centre. "How then," you may continue, "should we regard this sky which covers us, this earth which bears us, these houses which we inhabit, and all these other objects which surround us, since they are reserved for fire?" Then describe the opened tombs, the dead collecting together the remains of their bodies, Jesus Christ descending from the clouds with a lofty majesty, that open book wherein shall be written even the most secret thoughts of our hearts, that sentence pronounced before the face of all nations and

ages, the glory that will disclose itself to crown the righteous forever and to set them to reign on the same throne with Jesus Christ ; and, finally, that lake of fire and brimstone, that darkness and eternal horror, that gnashing of the teeth and rage shared with demons which shall be the portion of guilty souls.

Do not fail to explain the Decalogue thoroughly to children. Show them that it is an abridgment of the law of God, and that we find in the Gospel what is only contained in the Decalogue by remote implication. Explain what counsel is, and do not allow the children whom you instruct to delude themselves like the majority of mankind by a distinction between counsels and precepts that may be carried too far. Teach them that counsels are given to aid precepts, to strengthen men against their own weaknesses, to keep them away from the brink of the precipice over which they might be carried by their own weight, and, finally, that counsels become absolute precepts for those who cannot, under certain circumstances, keep the precepts without the counsels. For instance, persons that are too susceptible to the love of the world and the snares of society are obliged to follow the Gospel counsel to leave everything and to retire to solitude. Repeat often the truth that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life ; that is to say, that the mere observance of outward worship is useless and harmful, if it be not animated by a spirit of love and piety within. Make this language clear and forcible, show that God wishes to be honored by the heart and not by the lips ; that ceremonies serve to express and to excite our piety, but do not constitute that piety ; that the latter is wholly inward since God

seeks worshippers that are such in spirit and in truth ; that the main point is to love him in our hearts and to consider ourselves as existing in the universe alone with him. Teach that he has no need of our words or our attitudes, nor even of our money ; that what he wants is ourselves ; that we ought not only to do what his law prescribes, but to do it so as to obtain therefrom the results contemplated by the law in making the requirement ; that, for example, it is of no avail to hear mass unless we listen to it in order to unite ourselves to Christ, our sacrifice, and to be improved by all that brings his immolation before us. Conclude by saying that not all those who cry, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; that if we do not enter into the true feelings of love to God, renunciation of temporal goods, contempt for ourselves, and abhorrence for the world, we make Christianity an empty shadow for ourselves and for others.

Pass on to the sacraments : I take for granted that you have already explained, as we have directed, all their ceremonies, as far as they have been performed in the presence of the child. This will make their spirit and aim more obvious ; thus you can make a child comprehend how grand a thing it is to be a Christian, how shameful and sad to be one after the fashion of a worldling. Often recall to memory the exorcisms and promises of baptism, to show that the example and maxims of the world, far from having authority over us, ought to make all that comes to us from a source so hateful and poisonous, the object of suspicion. Do not even hesitate to describe, as St. Paul does, the devil ruling in the world and stirring the hearts of men with all the violent



passions that lead them to seek wealth, glory, and pleasure. Toward this pomp, you should say, which belongs still more to the devil than to the world, toward this spectacle of vanity, a Christian should never turn his eyes or his heart. The first step in Christianity, taken in baptism, is renouncing all worldly pomp; to be mindful of the world in spite of these solemn vows made to God, is to fall into a kind of apostasy; like a monk that, in spite of his vows, quits his cloister and penitential garb, to re-enter the world.

Speak, in addition, of how we ought to trample under foot the unreasonable contempt for others, the impious mockeries, and also the furies of the world, since confirmation makes us soldiers of Jesus Christ that we may fight against this enemy. "The bishop," you should say, "has laid his hands upon you in order to strengthen you against the most violent attacks of persecution; he has anointed you with holy oil in imitation of the ancients, who anointed themselves with oil to make their limbs more supple and vigorous when they went to combat; and finally, he has put the sign of the cross upon you to teach you that you must be crucified with Christ." "We are no longer," you should continue, "in the days of persecution, when those who were not willing to renounce the Gospel were put to death, but the world, which can never cease to be worldly, that is to say, corrupt, always carries on an indirect persecution of piety, lays snares for it to fall into, scoffs at it, and makes its practice so difficult in most conditions of life that even in the midst of Christian nations where the sovereign authority supports Christianity, we are in danger of blushing at the name of Jesus Christ and at imitating his life.



Represent strongly to children the blessing we enjoy in being united to Christ in the eucharist. In baptism, he makes us his brothers; in the eucharist, he makes us his members. As by the incarnation he has given himself to human nature in general, by the eucharist, which is such a natural sequence to the incarnation, he gives himself to each of the faithful in particular. All is real in the course of these mysteries: Jesus Christ gives his flesh as actually as he assumed it; but to feed upon the life-giving body of Jesus Christ without living in his spirit, is to render one's self guilty of the body and blood of the Lord and to eat and drink one's own damnation. He himself said, "He that feeds upon me ought to live for me."

What a misfortune, you should say further, to have need of the sacrament of penance, which implies that you have sinned since you have been made a child of God. Although that all-heavenly power which is exercised over the whole earth and which God has placed in the hands of his priests that they may bind and loose sinners according to their needs, is a great fountain of mercy, we should tremble in fear of abusing the gifts and the patience of God. We should earnestly desire the opportunity of being nourished every day by the body of Christ, which is the life, strength, and consolation of the righteous, but we should desire to obtain such perfect spiritual health that the need of the remedy for sick souls will diminish every day. This need will be only too great, whatever we may do, but it would be very wrong to make our lives a continuous and disgraceful round from sin to penitence and from penitence back to sin again. Therefore confession is only intended as

a step towards changing and correcting ourselves ; otherwise the words of absolution, powerful though they be from the institution of Christ himself, would become, through our indisposition, words only, and yet words of dire import which shall be our condemnation before God. Confession without an inward change, far from relieving the conscience of the burden of its sins, only adds to other sins that of a dreadful sacrilege.

Have the children you are training to read the prayers for the dying, which are admirable ; teach them what the Church does and says in administering extreme unction to the dying. What a consolation to these to receive anew the sacred anointing for this last conflict ! But to render ourselves worthy of the blessings of death, we must have been faithful to those of life.

Admire the richness of the grace of Christ Jesus who has not disdained to apply the remedy to the origin of the evil by sanctifying the source of our birth, which is marriage. How fitting it was to make a sacrament of this union of the man and the woman which represents that of God with his creatures and that of Christ with his Church ! How needful was this benediction to moderate the brutal passions of men, to spread peace and consolation over all families, to transmit religion as an inheritance from one generation to another ! Hence it must be inferred that marriage is a very pure and very holy estate, although less perfect than virginity ; that it is necessary to be called thereto ; that in it one should seek neither sensual pleasures nor worldly splendor, and only desire to bring up saints.

Praise the infinite wisdom of the Son of God, who has set apart pastors to represent himself among us, to in-

struct us in his name, to give us his body, to reconcile us with him after our falls, and constantly to train up new believers, and even new pastors to guide us after them, so that the Church may be preserved without intermission through all ages. Teach them that we ought to rejoice that God has given such power to men. Speak also of how religiously we ought to respect the Lord's anointed — they are the servants of God and the dispensers of his mysteries. Therefore we should lower our eyes and sigh when we perceive the slightest stain upon them, tarnishing the glory of their ministry; we should long for the power to wash it away, even with our own blood. Their doctrine is not their own; he that hears them, hears Christ himself; when they are assembled to expound the Scriptures in the name of Christ, the Holy Spirit speaks through them. Their time is not their own; therefore you should not wish to make them descend from so lofty a ministry, in which they ought to be devoting themselves to the Word and to prayer so as to be mediators between God and man, and come down to the affairs of the day. Still less is it permitted them to wish to profit by their revenues, which are the patrimony of the poor and the price of the sins of the people. The most frightful error, however, is to wish to raise one's friends and relatives to this formidable office without a vocation and with a view to temporal interest.

The necessity of prayer, founded on the need of grace which we have already explained, remains to be shown. God, you should tell a child, wishes us to ask his favor, not because he is unaware of our need, but because he would subject us to a requirement that will rouse us to

a recognition of this need. What he requires of us, therefore, is the humbling of our hearts, the realization of our misery and helplessness, and, finally, confidence in his goodness. The request that he wishes us to make consists only in the intention and the desire, for he has no need of our words. Often we repeat many words without praying, and often we pray in our hearts without pronouncing a single word. Yet words may be very useful; for if we are attentive to them, they excite in us the thoughts and feelings they express. For this reason Christ has provided us with a form of prayer. What a comfort to know from Christ himself how his Father would be addressed in prayer! What power ought to inhere in the supplications that God himself puts into our mouths! How should he refuse us what he has taken pains to teach us to ask for? Show them how simple and sublime is this prayer — brief, yet including all that we can look for from heaven.

The time for the first confession of children is a thing that cannot be decided here; it should depend upon the condition of their minds, and still more upon that of their consciences. They should be taught the nature of confession as soon as they are capable of understanding it. Then wait until one of them commits the first somewhat noticeable sin, and cover the child with confusion and remorse. You will see that one already instructed about confession will naturally seek consolation in self-accusation to a confessor. Try to act in such a way that the child will be stirred to a lively repentance, and find by the act of confession a perceptible alleviation of the suffering involved, so that this first confession may make a great impression upon the mind, and prove a source of grace for all the others.



The first communion, on the contrary, it seems to me, should take place at the period when the child seems most docile and most free from any prominent fault. One of the first fruits of love to God is that Jesus Christ will enable us better to appreciate and enjoy him in the grace of communion. The occasion should be long looked forward to, that is to say, a child should have been trained from earliest infancy to hope for the communion as for the greatest blessing to be enjoyed on this earth while awaiting the bliss of heaven. I believe it should be made as solemn an event as possible, that it should seem to children that your eyes are fixed upon them at this period, that you esteem them happy, that you share their happiness, and that you expect from them a conduct above their years after so great a step. However, although it is necessary to prepare children carefully for communion, I believe that, after they are prepared, they cannot be armed too soon with such a precious preventing grace, before their innocence shall be exposed to the dangerous circumstances in which it begins to be sullied.



## CHAPTER IX.

## SEVERAL FAULTS CHARACTERISTIC OF GIRLS.

THE care that must be taken to preserve girls from several faults common in their sex is still to be mentioned. Girls are nurtured in a weakness and timidity that renders them incapable of a steadfast and well-regulated course of conduct. At first affectation, and afterwards habit, has much to do with these ill-founded fears and tears so lightly shed: a contempt for such affectations would aid greatly in correcting them, since vanity has so large a share in their production.

You must repress in girls, also, too tender friendships, petty jealousies, excessive compliments, caresses, and assiduities: all these spoil them and accustom them to consider everything that is grave and serious too cold and severe. You should even endeavor to induce them to make an effort to speak briefly and precisely. Wit consists in cutting off all superfluous speech and saying a great deal in a few words, instead of which most women say little in many words. They mistake fluency of speech and liveliness of imagination for wit; they do not choose among their thoughts; nor do they establish any order there with reference to the matters they intend to explain; they are excited about nearly everything they say, and excitement makes them say too much. Nothing very fine can ever be hoped for from a woman unless you can confine her to reasoning con-

nectedly, examining her thoughts, setting them forth briefly, and after that knowing how to keep silent.

Another fact contributes largely to the long speeches of women; they are by nature artful and employ round-about ways to reach their ends. Women value artifice highly, and how could it be otherwise when they are acquainted with no better wisdom, and this is usually the first thing taught them by example? They have a pliant disposition so as to play readily all sorts of parts; tears cost them nothing, their passions are lively, and their knowledge is limited; hence they neglect nothing that makes for success, and means appear good to them that would not suit better regulated minds; they spend little time in considering whether they ought to desire a thing, but are very industrious in efforts to obtain it.

In addition, girls are timid and full of false shame, which is another source of dissimulation. The way to prevent this great evil is to avoid giving them any occasion for artifice and to accustom them to speaking out their inclinations frankly on all permissible subjects. Let them be free to show their weariness when they are not interested; let no one compel them to seem to enjoy certain persons or books that are not pleasing to them. Often a mother, prejudiced in favor of her confessor, is dissatisfied with her daughter until she accepts his guidance, and the daughter does so, from policy, against her inclination. Above all things girls should never be allowed to suspect that you wish to instill into them a purpose of entering a convent; for such an idea deprives them of faith in their parents, persuades them that these do not love them, agitates their minds, and leads them to play a forced part for

many years. When they have been so unfortunate as to form the habit of disguising their feelings, the way to set them right is to instruct them soundly in the principles of true wisdom; just as you find that the way to disgust them with the frivolous inventions of romance is to give them a taste for useful and pleasing stories. If you do not rouse a rational curiosity in them, they will have an ill-regulated one; and, in just the same way, if you do not train their minds to the true wisdom, they will apply themselves to the false, which is artifice.

Teach them by examples that one can be discreet, cautious, and attentive to the legitimate means of success without deception. Tell them that the greatest wisdom consists in speaking little, in distrusting one's self more than others, and not in making false speeches and acting the mar-plot. Rectitude of conduct and a universal reputation for honesty procure more confidence and esteem, and in consequence, in the long run, more advantages, even in a temporal way, than indirect methods. How this prudent uprightness distinguishes a person, and how worthy of great things does it render one!

But add how mean and contemptible are the objects of artifice; a trifle which you would not like to mention, or a hurtful passion. When we only wish what we ought to wish, we desire it openly and seek it by direct paths with moderation. What is more pleasant and comfortable than to be sincere, always tranquil, in harmony with one's self, having nothing to fear or contrive? Instead of which a dissembler is always excited, remorseful, in danger, and under the deplorable necessity of hiding one act of deceit with a hundred others.

With all these embarrassing disquietudes, artful persons never escape the inconvenience they would avoid: sooner or later they pass for what they really are. If the world is their dupe with regard to some detached action, it is not so with regard to their lives as wholes, they are always found out by some means or other. Often, indeed, these artful people are the dupes of those whom they would deceive; for if one seems to be letting one's self be deceived by them, they believe themselves esteemed when they are despised. And then, at least, they are not secured against suspicions; and what is more inconsistent with the benefits to be sought by a prudent self-interest than finding one's self always suspected. Say these things to girls from time to time according to the occasions offered, their needs, and the scope of their intelligence.

Observe further that artifice always proceeds from a base heart and a petty mind. Persons are artful only because they wish to conceal their true selves, not being such as they ought to be; or because, desiring permissible things, they take unworthy means to obtain them, instead of managing to select honorable ones. Call children's attention to the folly of certain artifices which they see employed, the contempt which they draw on those who employ them; and, finally, make the children ashamed of themselves when you surprise them in any dissimulation. Deprive them from time to time of what they like because they try to obtain it by artifice; declare that they shall get it when they ask for it frankly. Do not even fear to be compassionate to the little weaknesses of children, in order that you may give them courage to let you see these weaknesses. False shame



is the evil that is most dangerous and that most demands remedy; this defect alone, if you are not careful, will make all the others incurable.

Undeceive children with regard to those wicked subtleties by which people try to deceive their neighbors without any one's being able to reproach them with the deception; there is even more baseness and deceit in these subtle impositions than in ordinary frauds. Other persons practice deception in good faith, so to speak; but those who use such tricks add a new disguise to give it authority. Tell a child that God is truth itself; and that it is trifling with God to trifle with truth in our utterances; that we ought to make them precise and exact and to speak little in order that we may say nothing but what is right and may show our respect for the truth.

Be very careful then not to imitate those persons who applaud children when they have shown some intelligence in an act of deceit. Far from finding these tricks pretty and amusing yourself with them, repress them severely; and make all children's artifice turn out badly, in order that experience may disgust them with scheming. By praising them for such faults, you would persuade them that it is clever to be artful.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE VANITY OF BEAUTY AND ADORNMENTS.

DREAD no trait in girls so much as vanity. They are born with an ardent desire of pleasing. The paths that lead men to power and glory being closed to them, they try to indemnify themselves by charms of mind and body; from this proceeds their gentle and winning speech, from this, the fact that they long so for beauty and all outward graces, and that they are so passionately fond of adornments: a head-dress, a bit of ribbon, a ringlet higher or lower, the choice of a color, — all these take rank with important affairs in their eyes.

This excess goes to a greater extreme in our country than in any other. The changing fancy that rules among us produces a continual variety in fashions; thus to the love of adornment is added that of novelty, which has peculiar charms for such minds. These two follies put together destroy the boundaries of ranks and overthrow all customs. Since there is no longer any standard for dress and furniture, there is no longer any real one for different ranks; for as to the table of individuals, it is what public authority can least regulate; each one chooses according to his means, or rather, without regard to means, — according to his ambition and his vanity.

This ostentation ruins families; and the ruin of families entails the corruption of morals. On the one hand, ostentation excites, in those of low birth, an eagerness

for a sudden fortune, which cannot be acquired without sin, as the Holy Spirit assures us. On the other hand, the nobility, finding themselves without resources, commit acts of cowardice and dreadful meannesses in order to sustain their expenditure ; and in this way, by imperceptible degrees, honor, fidelity, honesty, and humanity are extinguished even between the nearest relations.

All these evils result from the authority to decide upon the fashions that is possessed by silly women ; such arbiters have made all that wish to preserve the moderation and simplicity of ancient customs to be accounted foolish barbarians.

Apply yourself, then, to teaching girls to appreciate how much more estimable is the honor that comes from good conduct and real ability than that derived from hair or dress. Beauty, you should tell them, deceives the one that possesses it far more than those who are dazzled thereby ; it disturbs her and intoxicates her soul ; she becomes more foolishly idolatrous of herself than the most impassioned lovers of the persons whom they adore. Between a beautiful woman and one that is not so, there is only a difference of a very few years. Beauty will only be detrimental unless it helps to marry a girl well, and how can it help in that direction if it be not supported by merit and virtue ? She can only hope to wed a young fool with whom she will be unhappy, unless her discretion and modesty cause her to be sought by men whose minds are steady and appreciative of solid qualities. Persons that derive all their pride from their beauty soon become ridiculous ; they reach, without realizing the fact, an age when their beauty fades, and they are still charmed with themselves, when the

world, on the contrary, is disgusted with them. In short, to rely on beauty alone is as unreasonable as to wish to base all merit on physical strength, according to the custom of barbarous and savage nations.

Let us pass on from beauty to dress. Genuine charms do not depend on vain and studied attire. True, we may seek for neatness, suitableness, and propriety in the clothes needed to cover our bodies ; but after all, these fabrics which cover us, and which can be made suitable and attractive, can never be the adornments that give true beauty.

I should wish, also, to call the attention of young girls to the noble simplicity shown in the statues and other representations that remain to us of the Greek and the Roman women. In these they would see how attractive and majestic are hair tied carelessly back, and full draperies floating in long folds. It would be well, also, to let them listen to the conversation of artists and other persons that have the exquisite taste of antiquity.

If you can elevate their minds but a little above the prejudices of fashion, they will soon have a contempt for their curls, so far from natural, and dresses of over-fanciful style. I very well know that it is not to be expected that they should assume an antique appearance ; it would be folly to wish it ; but they might, without any singularity, acquire a taste for that simplicity of dress which is so noble and gracious, and, besides, so in harmony with Christian principles. Thus, while outwardly conforming to present usage, they would at least know what should be thought of such usage. They would comply with fashion as with a disagreeable obligation, and yield to it only what could not be refused. Point out to them,

often and at an early period, the vanity and lightness of mind that causes the inconstancy of the fashions. It is a great mistake, for example, to increase the size of the head with innumerable piled-up decorations. True grace follows nature, and never conflicts with her.

Fashion, moreover, destroys itself; it aims always at perfection, but never reaches it; at least it is never willing to stop there. Fashion would be reasonable if it changed only to change no more after having found the perfection of convenience and gracefulness; but is not to change only for the sake of changing, to follow after fickleness and excess rather than after elegance and good taste? Besides, usually nothing is involved in the fashions but caprice. Women are in possession of the deciding power in this matter; they are the only ones who will be believed with regard to it: thus the more frivolous and less instructed minds carry the others along. They neither choose nor abandon anything by rule; that a well-designed style should have been in fashion a long time, is enough to prevent its being so any longer and to enable another, which though absurd has the claim of novelty, to take its place and be admired.

After having laid this foundation, teach them the principles of Christian modesty. We learn from our holy mysteries that man is born with the taint of sin: his body, laboring under a contagious disease, is an inexhaustible source of temptation to his soul. Jesus Christ teaches us to place all our virtue in distrust and defiance of ourselves. Would you wish, you might say to a girl, to hazard your soul and that of your neighbor for a foolish vanity? Have a horror, therefore, of ex-



— posture of the neck and shoulders and of all other acts of immodesty: even when such improprieties are indulged in without any evil passion, at least they imply vanity, they imply an unbridled desire to please. Does this vanity justify before God and before man conduct so rash, so improper, and so dangerous to others? Is this blind desire of pleasing in harmony with a Christian spirit which ought to regard as idolatrous all that turns man from the love of the Creator and contempt for the creature? And then when you endeavor to please what are you striving to do? Is it not to rouse the passions of men? Have you the power to restrain them if they go too far? And will they not always go too far if inflamed in the slightest degree? You prepare a subtle and mortal poison, scatter it among the spectators, and think yourself innocent! Add examples of persons whom modesty has made commendable and of those whom immodesty has led astray. But, above all things, allow nothing in a girl's dress that is above her station in life; repress severely all her fancies. Show her to what danger she exposes herself, and how contemptible she makes herself in the eyes of all sensible people by thus forgetting her position.

— What remains to be done is to destroy the illusions held by girls with regard to wit. If you do not take care, when they have some vivacity, they will intrigue, they will wish to talk on every subject, they will decide on matters least proportioned to their capacity, and affect to be wearied on account of their delicacy. A girl should only speak in behalf of her real needs, and then with an air of doubt and deference; she ought not to speak on subjects above the ordinary capacity of



girls, although she may be instructed in them. Though she may have as much as she could desire of memory, vivacity, pleasant manners, and fluency in graceful conversation, she shares these qualities with a large number of other women who are very silly and contemptible. But if she be possessed of a guarded and steady demeanor, and an equable and well-regulated mind; if she know how to be silent and to manage anything; these very rare qualities will distinguish her among her sex.

Fastidiousness and an affectation of ennui must be repressed by showing that good taste consists in being pleased with things in proportion to their utility. Nothing is estimable except good sense and virtue; both of which lead us to regard dissatisfaction and ennui as resulting, not from laudable refinement, but from the weakness of a diseased mind.

Since we must associate with common spirits, and engage in occupations that are not delightful, good sense, which is the only true refinement, consists in accommodating ourselves to ordinary persons. A mind that appreciates elegance, but knows how to rise above it in a case of necessity in order to attain more valuable ends, is infinitely superior to those characters who are fastidious and the slaves of their own dislikes.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF WOMEN.

LET us come now to a detailed account of those matters about which a woman should be instructed. What are her employments? To her is entrusted the education of her children; of the boys up to a certain age, of the girls until they are married or enter a convent. She has also the care of the conduct of her servants, of their morals and their work; of every item of expenditure; of the manner of arranging everything economically and creditably; and usually even of managing the estates and receiving the income.

The learning of women, like that of men, should be confined to instruction connected with their duties; the difference in their employments should be the ground of the difference in their studies. The instruction of women, therefore, should be limited to the subjects we have mentioned. If an inquisitive woman feels that this is setting narrow bounds to her curiosity, she deceives herself; she does not realize the importance and the extent of the matters upon which I propose that she shall be instructed.

What discernment will she require to find out the disposition and talents of each of her children, and to discover the way of conducting herself with them that is best adapted for developing their tempers, inclinations, and gifts, for anticipating their budding passions,

for giving them good principles, and for correcting their errors? What wisdom ought she to possess in order to acquire and to maintain authority over them without losing their affection and confidence. And then, does she not need to watch and to understand thoroughly those whom she places near her children? Undoubtedly. The mother of a family, therefore, should be fully instructed with regard to religion, and have a mind that is mature, steady, diligent, and skilled in management.

Can any one doubt that all these cares are entrusted to women since they fall to them naturally even during the lives of their husbands, who are occupied abroad? These duties concern them still more nearly if they become widows. Finally, St. Paul connects their salvation in the main with the education of their children, when he asserts that it is through these children that they shall be saved.

I do not explain here all that women ought to know to enable them to educate their children, because this reminder will suffice to make them perceive the extent of the knowledge that it is necessary they should possess.

To this care, add economy. Most women neglect this as a menial employment, only suited to peasants and farmers, or better still, to a steward or housekeeper. Women reared in ease, luxury, and idleness, are especially indolent and contemptuous with regard to such details: they see no great difference between a rural life and that of the savages in Canada. If you speak to them of the sale of wheat, of the methods of cultivating land, of the different kinds of revenues, of the levy of rents and other manorial rights, of the best way to let out farms and appoint bailiffs, they think you are trying to bring them down to occupations unworthy of them.

Yet it is only from ignorance that any one despises this science of economy. The ancient Greeks and Romans, so clever and so polished, studied it most assiduously: the greatest minds among them composed books upon the subject from their own experience which still remain to us, and in which the minutest details of agriculture are noted. It is well known that their conquering generals did not disdain to labor and to return to the plough after a triumph. This is so far removed from our customs that we could not believe it if history had left us any pretext for doubt. Yet is it not natural that one should think of defending or enlarging his country only for the sake of cultivating it in peace? Of what use is victory save to reap the fruits of peace? After all, it is the part of good sense to wish to be instructed precisely in the method of doing all that lies at the basis of human life; all great affairs depend thereon. The strength and happiness of a state consists, not in having a large number of poorly cultivated provinces, but in obtaining from the land in its possession all that is needed to support easily a numerous population.

Undoubtedly, to become skilled in all the arts pertaining to economy and to be qualified to govern well an entire household, which is a small republic, requires a loftier and broader genius than to jest, to talk about the fashions, and to exercise the small graces of conversation. The talent that only extends to talking well is of a very contemptible order. On every side we see women whose conversation is full of sensible maxims, but who, for want of having been diligent at the right time, show nothing but frivolity in their behavior.

Be equally on your guard against the opposite defect : women are in danger of being extreme in everything. It is well to accustom them from infancy to having charge of something, to keeping accounts, to noting how purchases of every kind are made, and to learning how each particular thing should be done in order to conform to good usage. But beware of letting economy run into avarice with them ; show them in detail all the ridiculous features of that passion. Speak to them in the following strain : “Remember that avarice gains little, and dishonors itself greatly. A reasonable person will only seek to avoid, by a frugal and industrious life, the disgrace and injustice that attaches to prodigal and ruinous behavior. To retrench superfluous expenditure is necessary only that one may be in a condition to do more liberally what propriety, affection, or charity prompts. Often to contrive to lose at the right place secures a great gain ; it is good management, and not stated, sordid economies that bring large profits.” Do not fail to point out the gross error of those women who are pleased at saving a candle, but allow themselves to be deceived by a steward about the sum total of their affairs.

Have regard to neatness as well as to economy. Accustom girls to put up with nothing that is unclean or out of order, so that they will notice the least disorder in a house. Remind them, too, that nothing contributes more to economy and neatness than keeping everything always in its own place. This rule seems trivial, but, if carefully observed, goes a long way. Do you want anything ? You never lose a moment in hunting it. There is no trouble, no dispute, no embarrassment when you



need it ; you put your hand upon it at once, and when you have used it, you immediately put it back in the place from which you took it. This good order constitutes one of the largest parts of neatness ; such a careful arrangement is what most strikes the eye. Besides, the place assigned to each thing being that which suits it best, not only as regards elegance and the pleasure of the eye, but also for its preservation, it will be less worn out there than elsewhere ; there, it will not be injured by any accident as a general thing ; there, it will even be kept more neatly, for, as an example, a vessel will neither get dusty nor be in danger of getting broken when it is put back into its place immediately after it is used. The spirit of precision that leads to setting things in order, leads also to keeping them clean. Add to these advantages that of ridding domestics by such a habit of the spirit of idleness and confusion. Besides, it is a great thing to render their service prompt and ready, and to deprive one's self of the temptation to be impatient oftentimes at the delays that result from disarranged things which are difficult to find. At the same time an excess of neatness and elegance is to be avoided. Neatness, when tempered by moderation, is a virtue, but when carried beyond good taste it degenerates into pettiness of spirit. Good taste excludes excessive fastidiousness, treats trifles as trifles, and is not offended thereby. Speak with contempt before children of the trinkets to which some women are so devoted, and which insensibly lead them to such indiscreet expenditures. Accustom them to a neatness that is simple and easy to practice ; show them the best way to do things, but show them still more how to pass them

by. Tell them how much pettiness of mind and meanness there is in scolding about a poorly seasoned soup, a badly draped curtain, or a chair too low or too high.

It is undoubtedly a mark of a better disposition to be voluntarily inelegant than to be fastidious about such unimportant matters. This false delicacy, if it be not repressed in women of talent, is still more dangerous with regard to conversation than in all other respects: almost every one is insipid and tiresome to them; the least want of polish seems monstrous to them; they are always contemptuous and disgusted. They should be early taught that nothing is so unwise as to judge a person superficially by his manners instead of considering the depth of his intellect, his feelings, and his useful qualities. Show them, by different experiences, how much more estimable is a countryman of a common, or, if you will, ridiculous appearance, with his ill-timed compliments, than a courtier who conceals under accomplished manners an ungrateful heart that is dishonest and capable of all kinds of meanness and dissimulation. Add that there is always some weakness in minds that have a great inclination to ennui and disgust. No one's conversation is so bad that some good cannot be derived from it: although when free to choose we should choose the best, there is one consolation when we are reduced to it, since we can make persons talk of what they know, and the talented can thus get some instruction always from the least enlightened. But let us return to the subjects in which a girl should be instructed.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONTINUATION OF THE DUTIES OF WOMEN.

THERE is a science of domestic service which is not insignificant. Servants that have some honor and religion should be selected: you should be familiar with the duties to which you would assign them, the time and pains that must be devoted to each thing, the best manner of executing every task, and the expenditure necessary in each case. For example, you will blame a steward unjustly, if you wish him to prepare a dessert more quickly than it is possible to do so, or if you do not know, almost exactly, the quantity of sugar and other ingredients that should enter into the dish you wish him to make: thus, if you have no knowledge of the employments of your servants, you are in danger of being either their dupe or their scourge. You must also be acquainted with the tempers of your servants, direct their minds, and govern in a Christian way the whole of that little republic which is usually very tumultuous. Some authority is undoubtedly necessary; for the less reasonable people are, the more they must be restrained by fear: but as these servants are Christians, who are your brothers in Christ and to whom you owe respect as to his members, you are under obligation to display authority only when persuasion fails.

Seek, therefore, to make yourself beloved by the members of your household without any degrading famil-

ilarity. Do not enter into conversation with them; but, on the other hand, do not hesitate to speak to them often enough, kindly and without condescension, about their needs. Let them be certain of finding in you counsel and compassion: do not reprove them harshly for their faults; do not appear so much surprised or repelled by these, as hopeful that they will not prove incorrigible. Compel them kindly to listen to reason, and put up with them often in respect to their service in order to be in a condition to convince them soberly that you speak to them without vexation or impatience, less for the sake of your work than in their interest. It will not be easy to accustom young persons of noble birth to this gentle and charitable behavior; for the impatience and ardor of youth added to the false idea that is given them about their birth, leads them to regard servants almost as they look upon horses: they think themselves of a different nature from their attendants, and imagine that the latter are created for the convenience of their masters. Try to show them how opposed such ideas are to modesty toward's one's self and humanity towards one's neighbor. Explain to them that men were not made to be waited on; that it is a gross error to believe that some men are born to humor the idleness and pride of others; that, as servitude has been established in opposition to the natural equality of man, it should be softened as much as possible; that as masters, who are better educated than their servants, are full of faults, it should not be expected that the latter, who have been without instruction and good examples, should be free from them; that if servants injure themselves by serving poorly, what is ordinarily called being well



served injures masters still more ; for this facility in being satisfied in every respect only tends to weaken the mind, so as to render it ardent and eager for the most trifling luxuries, in short, to abandon it to its own desires.

Nothing is better for this domestic management than to accustom girls thereto at an early period. Assign them something to control, on condition of rendering an account to you : this confidence will charm them, for youth feels an incredible delight when first trusted and allowed to enter upon some serious occupation. A beautiful example of this is found in Queen Margaret. This princess relates in her *Memoirs* that the most vivid pleasure experienced by her during her life was occasioned by finding that the queen, her mother, began to speak to her when she was still very young as if she were a mature person ; she, who, up to this time, had known nothing but childish sports, felt herself transported with joy at sharing the confidence of the queen and her brother, the Duke of Anjou, with regard to the secrets of the state. Even allow a girl to commit some mistakes in such attempts and sacrifice something to her instruction ; call her attention kindly to what she should have said or done to avoid the difficulties into which she has fallen ; tell her of your own past experiences, and do not hesitate to mention to her mistakes similar to her own which you committed in your youth. Thus you will give her confidence, without which education is reduced to irksome forms.

Teach a girl to read and write correctly. It is disgraceful, but common, to meet women of some talent and culture that do not know how to pronounce what they



read correctly ; they either hesitate or drawl in reading, instead of which one should pronounce in a simple and natural, but firm and sustained, tone. They are still more grossly deficient in orthography, or in the manner of forming and connecting their letters in writing. At least, accustom them to making their lines straight, so as to render their handwriting clear and legible. Girls must also be familiar with grammar. In the case of their native tongue, it is not needful to teach it to them by means of rules, as scholars learn Latin at college ; only teach them, while avoiding affectation, not to use one tense for another, to employ correct expressions, and to set forth their thoughts clearly and connectedly, and in a brief and precise manner. You will thus place them in a condition to teach their children some day to speak correctly without any study. It is well known that the mother of the Gracchi in ancient Rome contributed greatly by a good education to form the eloquence of her children, who became such distinguished men.

Girls ought also to comprehend the four rules of arithmetic ; you will help them practically in this respect by having them often reckon up accounts. This is a very painful task to many persons ; but a habit of performing it, formed in childhood, added to facility in computing rapidly by the aid of rules all kinds of most complicated accounts, will lessen this distaste greatly. It is well known that exactness in keeping accounts often produces good order in households.

It would be well also for girls to know something of the principal rules of law ; for instance, the difference between a will and a deed of gift ; the nature of a con-

tract, of an entail, of a division among joint heirs, the main provisions of the law or of the customs of the country in which we live for rendering these acts valid ; what is one's own and what belongs to the community ; the distinction between personal and real estate. If they marry, all their most important affairs hinge upon these matters.

Show girls, at the same time, how incapable they are of penetrating the difficulties of the law ; how, from the weakness of the human intellect, the law itself is full of obscurities and doubtful rules ; how jurisprudence varies ; how all that depends on judges becomes uncertain, however clear it may seem ; and how ruinous and distressing is the length of even the most prosperous suits. Point out to them the agitation of a court of justice, the raging of chicanery, the pernicious windings and subterfuges of legal proceedings, the immense expense they involve, the miserable condition of those who go to law, the eagerness of counsellors, attorneys, and clerks to enrich themselves speedily by impoverishing the litigants. Speak also of the means that render a suit, right at bottom, unfortunate on account of its form ; of the contradiction of principles in different tribunals : if you are referred to the Grand Chamber, your suit is gained ; if you go to the Court of Inquiry, it is lost. Do not forget the conflicts of jurisdiction, and the danger one is in of pleading before a court for many years to find out where to plead. Finally, call attention to the difference of opinion often found between counsellors and judges about the same suit ; in the consultation you gained the cause, but your decree charges you with the costs.

All these points seem to me of value in preventing women from being eager for law-suits, and from blindly abandoning themselves to counsels at enmity with peace, when they are widows or mistresses of their own property in another condition. They ought to listen to their business advisers, but not yield to them altogether.

They should distrust these with regard to the suits which they try to get them to undertake, consult men of broader minds and more alive to the advantages of a compromise ; and, finally, they should be convinced that the truest wisdom with regard to law-suits is to foresee their inconveniences, and avoid them.

Girls of noble birth and considerable property should be instructed in the duties of land-owners ; tell them what can be done to prevent the abuses, the outrages, the chicaneries, and the frauds so frequent on estates. With these instructions unite methods of establishing little schools and charitable societies for the relief of the sick poor. Call their attention, also, to the traffic that may be established sometimes in certain districts to diminish the wretchedness there ; but, above all, teach them how useful instruction and Christian government can be obtained for the people. All this requires too many particulars to be given here.

In explaining the duties of lords, do not forget their rights. Teach girls the meanings of the terms fiefs, lord paramount, vassal, homage, rents, impropriation of tithes, right of champerty, fines of alienation, indemnities, amortization and recognizances, court-rolls, and other similar expressions. This information is indispensable, since the management of estates is entirely made up of such matters.

After these instructions — which ought to occupy the first place — I think it is not unprofitable to allow girls, according to their leisure and the extent of their intelligence, to read profane books that contain nothing dangerous to the passions. This is, indeed, the means of disgusting them with comedies and romances. Put into their hands, then, Greek and Roman histories ; in these they will find remarkable examples of courage and of disinterestedness. Do not leave them in ignorance of the history of France, which has its attractions too ; add the histories of neighboring countries and well-written stories of remote lands, — all these serve to — develop the intellect and to lift the soul to noble sentiments, provided that vanity and affectation are avoided. It is ordinarily believed that a girl of noble birth whom one would bring up well should learn Italian and Spanish ; but I consider nothing less useful than such studies unless a girl is in attendance upon some Spanish or Italian princess, such as our Medicean or Austrian queens. Under other circumstances, these two languages are of very little service to girls, except in reading books that are dangerous and likely to increase the defects of their sex. There is much more to be lost than to be gained by such study. The study of Latin would be much more reasonable, for that is the language of the Church ; good results and most precious consolation follow from understanding the meaning of the words of divine service, in which we so often take part. Even those who seek for beauties of expression will find much more perfect and sound examples of them in Latin than in Italian and Spanish, where a play of wit and liveliness of fancy reign without restraint. I should be willing,



however, to teach Latin only to girls of sound judgment and modest behavior, who would know how to value such an acquirement justly, would abstain from foolish curiosity, would conceal what they learned, and seek only improvement therefrom.

I should also permit girls, though with much discretion, to read works of eloquence and poetry, if I saw that they had a taste for these subjects and that their judgments were sound enough to confine them to the right use of such books ; but I would beware of unsettling their too active imaginations and wish to see a careful moderation in all this. Everything that can awaken the passion of love seems to me the more dangerous, the more it is softened and cloaked.

The same precautions are required with regard to music and painting ; all these arts are of the same spirit and flavor. As for music, it is well known that the ancients believed nothing to be more dangerous for a well-governed republic than to allow the introduction of an effeminate melody. Such music enervates men, and renders their souls weak and voluptuous : languishing and passionate strains afford so much pleasure only because the mind gives itself up to the charm of the senses even to the point of intoxication. This is why the magistrates of Sparta broke all instruments of which the harmony was too entrancing, which was one of the most important regulations of that city ; this is why Plato severely rejected all the delicious tones that enter into Asiatic music. With much more reason should Christians, who ought never to seek pleasure for itself alone, hold in aversion such poisonous delights.

If everything that does not tend to a good end were



taken away from poetry and music, they might be very advantageously employed to excite in the soul vivid and sublime feelings with regard to virtue. How many poetical works are contained in the scriptures which, to all appearances, were sung by the Hebrews! Hymns were the first records that preserved more distinctly, before the scriptures, the tradition of divine things among men. We have seen how powerful music has been among heathen nations in lifting the soul above vulgar sentiments. The Church has deemed herself unable to console her children in any better way than by singing the praises of God. These arts, therefore, which the spirit of God himself has consecrated, cannot be given up. Christian music and poetry would be the greatest of all aids in giving a distaste for worldly pleasures, but, with the false precedents that exist in our nation, a taste for these arts is scarcely without danger. You must hasten, then, to show a young girl whom you find very susceptible to such impressions, how many charms can be found in music without quitting sacred subjects. If she has some voice and some talent for the beauties of music, do not hope to keep her always in ignorance of them; prohibition would increase the passion. It would be better to give this torrent a fixed course than to undertake to stem it.

Painting is more easily turned to profit among us; it has, besides, a special advantage for women because without it their needlework cannot be well planned. I know that they might be confined to those simple pieces of work that require no art; but, with the purpose which it seems to me one should have of occupying the minds at the same time that you occupy the hands

of women of rank, I should prefer that they do work in which art and skill would season labor with some degree of pleasure. Such productions cannot have any beauty unless guided by a knowledge of the rules of design. Hence it is that nearly all we see now in the way of stuffs, lace, and embroidery is in bad taste; in them everything is confused, without design, without proportion. Such things pass for beautiful because they cost those who make them much labor and those who purchase them much money; their gaudiness dazzles those who look at them from a distance or who are not good judges. Women have based their rules of fashion upon these: he that would criticise them would be regarded as visionary. Women, however, might undeceive themselves by studying painting, and thus placing themselves in a position to produce, with moderate expenditure and great pleasure, works of a noble variety and of a beauty that would be above the uncertain caprices of fashion.

Women ought equally to dread and to despise idleness. Let them reflect how the early Christians, whatever their rank might be, labored, not to amuse themselves, but to make of labor a serious, steady, and profitable occupation. The order of nature; the penance imposed on the first man, and in him on all his posterity; that of which the new man, which is Christ Jesus, has left us such a grand example, — everything urges us to a laborious life, each one after his own fashion.

In the education of a young girl, you should take into consideration her rank, the places where she is likely to spend her life, and the calling she will in all probability

take up. Guard against her entertaining hopes above her means and station. There are few persons whom it does not cost dear to indulge too lofty hopes; when once they have looked towards a higher estate, that which might have rendered them happy no longer offers aught that is not distasteful. If a girl is to live in the country, turn her attention, at an early period, to the occupations she must engage in there, and do not let her taste the amusements of the city; show her the advantages of a simple and active life. If she is of the middle class in the city, do not let her meet the people of the court; such intercourse would only tend to make her assume a ridiculous and unsuitable bearing: keep her within the bounds of her station in life, and give her for models those who have succeeded best therein: prepare her mind for the things she is to do all her life; teach her the economy of a plain household, the care she must take with regard to the income from the country, with regard to the stocks and rents that constitute the city income, all that concerns the education of children, and, finally, the particulars of the other occupations of business or commerce upon which you foresee that she must enter when she is married. If, on the contrary, she determines to become a nun, without being driven to it by her parents, from that moment direct her whole education towards the condition to which she aspires; make her give sober proof of the powers of her mind and body, without awaiting her novitiate, which is a kind of engagement on account of worldly honor; accustom her to silence; practice her in obedience with respect to matters opposed to her inclinations and habits; try to find out gradually of what she

is capable with regard to the rule she wishes to take upon herself ; try to accustom her to a plain, sober, and laborious life ; show her in detail how happy and free is the person that can do without things which vanity and self-indulgence, or even the decorum of the world, make necessary outside of a cloister ; in a word, in making her practice poverty, teach her to find in it the blessedness that Jesus Christ has revealed to us. Finally, neglect nothing that may prevent leaving in her heart after she has quit the world, a taste for any of its vanities. Without exposing her to too dangerous experiences, lay bare the thorns concealed beneath the false joys afforded by the world ; call her attention to those in it who are unhappy in the midst of pleasures.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## GOVERNESSES.

I FORESEE that, in the minds of many persons, this plan of education may pass for a chimerical project. It would require, they will say, extraordinary discernment, patience, and talent for its execution. Where are the governesses capable of comprehending it? With still greater reason, where are those who can carry it out? But I pray you to consider thoughtfully that when one undertakes to write a treatise upon the best education that can be given children, it is not with the purpose of giving an imperfect system. You should not, therefore, find fault with the fact that you meet with the utmost perfection in this investigation. It is true that each individual cannot in practice go as far as our thoughts run on paper when there is nothing to stop them; but even when we cannot reach perfection in this undertaking, it will not be unavailing to have recognized it and striven to attain it; these are the best means of approaching it. Besides, this treatise does not take for granted a perfect disposition in children and a combination of all the circumstances most fortunate for the production of a perfect education. On the contrary, I endeavor to give remedies for bad or spoiled dispositions; I take for granted the usual mistakes in education and have recourse to the simplest methods of rectifying, in whole or in part, the training that has need of such a



process. True, you will not find in this little book, the means of making a neglected or badly conducted education successful: but should that astonish you? Is not the best that you could desire, to find simple rules, the careful practice of which would constitute a thorough education? I acknowledge that parents can and do every day, give less care to their children than I propose; but we see only too well how much the young suffer from this negligence. The road I point out is the shortest, however long it may appear, since it leads directly where you wish to go. The other road, that of fear and superficial culture of the mind, however short it may appear, is too long; for by it the true end of education, which is to influence the minds of children and to inspire them with a sincere love of virtue, is hardly ever reached. The majority of the children that are led by this path, have to begin their education anew after it seems finished, and after having passed the first years of their introduction to the world in committing mistakes which are often irreparable, must depend on experience and their own reflections to reveal to them all the principles that this painful but superficial education could not instil. It should be further observed that the pains that I insist should be taken with children at the first, and that the inexperienced regard as burdensome and impracticable, prevent much more trying annoyances and smooth away obstacles that become almost insurmountable in the course of a less careful and harsher education. In conclusion, remember that to carry out this plan, doing the things that require great talent, is less important than avoiding the gross mistakes that we have mentioned in detail. Often the

only important things are to refrain from urging children forward, to be constantly near them, to watch them, to inspire their confidence, to reply clearly and wisely to their little questions, to allow them to act out their dispositions in order that you may understand them better, and to correct them patiently when they are mistaken or commit some fault.

It is not fair to expect that a good education can be conducted by a poor governess. Surely it is enough to furnish rules for making one successful through the efforts of a person of average ability; it is not asking too much of this person of average ability to expect her to possess at least good sense, a tractable disposition, and a true fear of God. Such a governess will find nothing subtle nor abstract in this treatise; even if she should not comprehend it all, she will catch the general idea and that will suffice. Make her read it several times, take the trouble to read it with her, give her the privilege of stopping you at every point that she does not understand and of which she is not fully convinced; then set her to practising it; and, when you see her, in speaking to the child, lose sight of the rules of this treatise which she has agreed to follow, gently remind her of the fact in private. This diligence will be painful to you at first; but if you are the father or the mother of the child it is your bounden duty. Besides, you will not long have difficulties in this respect; for the governess, if she be sensible and willing, will learn more in a month from her experience and your counsel than from long arguments; soon she will walk in the right path of her own accord. You will have this further advantage to relieve you, that she will find in this little book

the principal statements that should be made to children about the most important truths, all arranged so that she will have little to do but to follow them out. Thus she will have before her eyes a collection of the conversations that she ought to carry on with the child. This is a sort of practical training which will lead her like a guiding hand. You may also avail yourself, with much profit, of the Historical Catechism which we have already mentioned; have the governess whom you are training to read it several times, and also try to make her understand the preface thoroughly, so that she may catch the spirit of this method of instruction. It must be confessed perhaps, that these persons of ordinary ability to whom I have confined myself, are rarely to be found. But, after all, an instrument suited for the work of education is indispensable; for the most simple things do not accomplish themselves, and are always badly done by unqualified persons. Choose, then, either from your household, or on your estate, or at the houses of your friends, or from well-ordered sisterhoods, some girl whom you think capable of receiving training: aim early at bringing her up for this employment, and keep her about you for some time to test her before entrusting her with so precious a charge. Five or six governesses trained to this method would soon be qualified to train a great number of others. Perhaps some drawback would be found in many of these; but in this great number there would always be some to repay your efforts, and you would not be liable to the extreme embarrassment in which persons constantly find themselves. The religious and secular communities that devote themselves, according to their regulations, to

training girls, might also adopt these ideas for training their mistresses of boarding-schools and teachers.

But, although the difficulty of finding governesses is great, it must be acknowledged that there is another difficulty in education which is still greater; this results from parental defects; all else is of no avail unless parents are willing to assist in this work. The foundation of everything is that they should give their children none but correct principles and edifying examples. This can be expected only in very few families. In most households we see only confusion, change, and a collection of servants who are equally bad tempered themselves, and a cause of division between the heads of the house. What a frightful school for children! Often a mother who passes her life in play, at the theatre, and in improper conversations, complains in grave accents that she cannot find a governess qualified to train her daughters. What can the best education do for girls in contact with such a mother? Often, too, we see parents, who, as St. Augustine says, take their children to public theatres and to other entertainments that cannot fail to give them a distaste for the sober and industrious life on which these very parents wish them to enter; thus they mingle poison with wholesome food. They speak only of wisdom; but they inure the volatile imaginations of children to the violent excitements of impassioned acting and of music, after which the children are incapable of steady application. A taste of the passions is given them, and innocent pleasures are made insipid to them. Yet their parents still expect their education to prosper, and regard a training that will not allow this mixture of good and bad as depressing and severe. Is



not this trying to have the credit of desiring a good education for their children without being willing to take any trouble or to submit to the most indispensable requirements?

Let us close with the picture that the Wise Man has drawn of the virtuous woman: "Her price," he says, "is like the price of that which comes from afar and from the extremities of the earth. The heart of her husband trusts in her; she never needs the spoils which he brings back from his victories; she does him good all the days of her life and never evil. She seeks wool and flax: she works with hands that are full of wisdom. Laden like a merchant vessel, she brings her provisions from afar. She rises in the night and distributes food to her servants. She considers a field and buys it with her labors, the fruit of her hands; she plants a vineyard. She girdles her loins with might; she strengthens her arms. She has tasted and seen how good her merchandise is: her candle never goes out through the night. Her hand lays hold on rude labors; her fingers seize the distaff. She opens her hand, moreover, to the needy; she stretches it out to the poor. She fears neither cold nor snow; all her household have lined garments; she has woven a robe for herself; fine linen and purple are her clothing. Her husband is distinguished in the gates, that is to say, in the councils where he is seated with the most venerable men. She makes garments and sells them, girdles and delivers them to the Canaanites. Strength and beauty are her vestments, and she shall smile in her last hour. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and a law of kindness is on her tongue. She is observant in her house



even to foot-prints, and she never eats her bread without occupation. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband rises up also and he praises her : 'Many daughters,' says he, 'have heaped up riches ; you have excelled them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain : the woman that fears God, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands ; and in the gates, in the public councils, let her be praised by her own works.' "

Although the extreme difference of the customs of that day from ours and the abruptness and boldness of the figures render this language, at first glance, obscure, he that examines it closely finds the style so vivid and full of meaning that he is soon charmed. But what I desire more to call your attention to, is the authority of Solomon, which is that of the Holy Spirit itself, who uses such exalted language to show us how much simplicity of manners, economy, and industry are to be admired in a woman of wealth and rank.







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